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CALAMITIES

OF

AUTHORS;

INCLUDING

SOME INQUIRIES

RESPECTING

THEIR MORAL AND LITERARY CHARACTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE."

"Such a superiority do the pursuits of Literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions.'

HUME.

VOL. II.

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THE CALAMITIES

OF

AUTHORS.

LITERARY RIDICULE.

Illustrated by some Account of a Literary Satire.

RIDICULE may be considered as a species of eloquence; it has all its vehemence, all its exaggeration, or its diminution; it is irresistible! Its business is not with truth, but with its appearances; and it is this similitude, in perpetual comparison with the original, raising contempt, which produces the ridiculous.

There is nothing real in RIDICULE; the more exquisite, the more it exerts the ima-

gination. But, when directed towards an individual, by preserving an unity of character in all its parts, it produces a fictitious personage, so modelled on the prototype, that we know not to distinguish the true one from the false. Even with an intimate knowledge of the real object, the ambiguous image slides into our mind, for we are at least as much influenced in our opinions by our imagination, as by our judgment. Hence some great characters have come down to us, spotted with the taints of indelible wit; and a Satirist of this class, sporting with distant resemblances and fanciful analogies, has made the fictitious accompany for ever the real character. From a pique with AKENSIDE, on some reflections against Scotland, SMOLLETT exhibited a man of great genius and virtue as a most ludicrous personage; and who

could discriminate, in the ridiculous physician in Peregrine Pickle, what is real, and what is fictitious *.

* Of AKENSIDE few particulars have been recorded, for the friend who best knew him was of so cold a temper in regard to the publick, that he has not, in his account, revealed a solitary feature in the character of the Poet. Yet Akenside's mind and manners were of a fine romantic cast, drawn from the moulds of classical antiquity. Such was the charm of his converse, that he has even heated the cold and sluggish mind of Sir John Hawkins, who has, with unusual vivacity, described a day spent with him in the country. As I have mentioned the fictitious physician in Peregrine Pickle, let the same page shew the real one. I shall transcribe Sir John's forgotten words — omitting his "neat and elegant dinner." "AKENSIDE's conversation was of the most delightful kind, learned, instructive, and, without any affectation of wit, cheerful and entertaining. One of the pleasantest days of my life I passed with him, Mr. Dyson, and another friend, at Putney — where the enlivening sunshine of a sum-

Besides, the banterers and ridiculers * possess this hard advantage over sturdy honesty or nervous sensibility — their

mer's day, and the view of an unclouded sky, were the least of our gratifications. In perfect good humour with himself and all about him, he seemed to feel a joy that he lived, and poured out his gratulations to the great Dispenser of all felicity, in expressions that Plato himself might have uttered on such an occasion. In conversations with select friends, and those whose studies had been nearly the same with his own, it was an usual thing with him, in libations to the memory of eminent men among the antients, to bring their characters into view, and expatiate on those particulars of their lives, that had rendered them famous." Observe the arts of the ridiculer! he seized on the romantic enthusiasm of AKENSIDE, and turned it to *the cookery of the Antients!*

* This word, not frequently used, is necessary to the language. We have no other substitute for the French *Railleur*. It is admitted into Johnson's Dictionary.

amusing fictions affect the world more than the plain tale that would put them down. They have been exciting our risible emotions, while they were reducing their adversary to contempt — otherwise they would not be distinguished from gross slanderers. When the Wit has gained over the laughers on his side, he has struck a blow which puts his adversary *hors de combat*. A grave reply can never wound ridicule, which, assuming all forms, has really none. Witty calumny and licentious raillery are airy nothings that float about us, invulnerable from their very nature, like those chimeras of hell which the sword of Æneas could not pierce — yet these shadows of truth, these false images, these fictitious realities, have made heroism tremble, turned the eloquence of wisdom into folly, and bowed down the spirit of honour itself.

Not that the legitimate use of RIDICULE is denied: the wisest men have been some of the most exquisite ridiculers; from Socrates to the Fathers, and from the Fathers to Erasmus, and from Erasmus to Butler and Swift. Ridicule is more efficacious than Argument; when that keen instrument cuts, what cannot be untied. I will give some instances. "The Rehearsal" wrote down the unnatural taste for the rhyming heroic tragedies, and brought the nation back from sound to sense, from rant to passion. More important events may be traced in the history of Ridicule. When a certain set of intemperate Puritans, in the reign of Elizabeth, the ridiculous reformists of abuses in Church and State, congregated themselves under the literary *Nom de guerre* of *Martin Mar-prelate,* a stream of libels ran

throughout the nation. The grave discourses of the Archbishop and the Prelates could never silence the hardy and concealed libellers. They employed a moveable printing-press, and the publishers perpetually shifting their place, long escaped detection*. They declared their works were "printed in Europe, not far from some of the bouncing Priests;" or they were "printed over sea, in Europe, within two furlongs of a bouncing Priest, at

* Never did sedition travel so fast, nor conceal itself so closely. The press which printed these books was first set up near Kingston in Surrey, thence conveyed into Northamptonshire, thence to Norton, and afterwards to Coventry; thence into another part of Warwickshire, whence the letters were sent to another press at Manchester, where the snake was at length scotched by the Earl of Derby, hard at work on one of their most popular libels. See Sir G. Paul's Life of Whitgift.

the cost and charges of Martin Mar-prelate, Gent." It was then that TOM NASH, whom I am about to introduce to the reader's more familiar acquaintance, the most exquisite banterer of that age of genius, turned on them their own weapons, and annihilated them into silence when they found themselves paid in their own base coin. He rebounded their popular ribaldry on themselves, with such replies as " Pap with a hatchet, or a fig for my god-son, or, crack me this nut. To be sold, at the sign of the Crab-tree Cudgel, in Thwack-coat lane." Not less biting was his " Almond for a Parrot, or an Alms for Martin." NASH first silenced *Martin Mar-prelate*, and the Government afterwards hanged him; NASH might be vain of the greater honour. A Ridiculer then is the best champion to meet another

Ridiculer; their scurrilities magically undo each other.

But the abuse of ridicule is not one of the least calamities of literature, when it withers genius, and gibbets whom it ought to enshrine. Never let us forget that Socrates before his judges asserted, that "his persecution originated in the licensed raillery of Aristophanes, which had so unduly influenced the popular mind during *several years!*" And thus a fictitious Socrates, not the great moralist, was condemned. Armed with the most licentious ridicule, the Aretine of our own country and times, has proved that its chief magistrate was not protected by the shield of domestic and public virtues; a false and distorted image of an intelligent monarch could cozen the gross many, and aid the purposes of the subtile few.

There is a plague-spot in ridicule, and the man who is touched with it, can be sent forth as the jest of his country. The family of the *Malevoli,* who flourished even in the days of Terence, for he has preserved their name by a dedication addressed to them, are still the patrons, if not the relatives, of the Ridiculers.

The literary reign of Elizabeth, so fertile in every kind of genius, exhibits a remarkable instance, in the controversy between the witty Tom Nash and the learned Gabriel Harvey. It will illustrate the nature of *the fictions of ridicule;* expose the materials of which its shafts are composed; and the secret arts by which ridicule can level a character which seems to be placed above it.

Gabriel Harvey was an author of considerable rank, but with two learned bro-

thers, as Wood tells us, " had the ill luck to fall into the hands of that noted and restless buffoon TOM NASH."

HARVEY is not unknown to the lover of poetry, from his connexion with SPENSER, who loved and revered him. He is the Hobynol whose poem is prefixed to the Faery Queen, who introduced Spenser to Sir Philip Sidney: and, besides his intimacy with the literary characters of his times, he was a Doctor of Laws, an erudite scholar, and distinguished as a Poet. Such a man could hardly be contemptible; and yet, when some little peculiarities become aggravated, and his works are touched by the caustic of the most adroit banterer of that age of wit, no character has descended to us with such grotesque deformity, and is exhibited in so ludicrous an attitude.

Harvey was a pedant, but pedantry was part of the erudition of an age when our national literature was passing from its infancy; he introduced hexameter verses into our language, and pompously laid claim to an invention which, designed for the reformation of English verse, was practised till it was found sufficiently ridiculous. His style was infected with his pedantic taste, and the hard outline of his satirical humour betrays the scholastic cynic, not the airy and fluent wit. He had, perhaps, the foibles of a man who was clearing himself from obscurity; he prided himself on his family alliances, while he fastidiously looked askaunce on the trade of his father, a rope-manufacturer. He was somewhat rich in his apparel, according to the rank in society he held; and, hungering after the notice

of his friends, they fed him on soft sonnet and relishing dedication, till HARVEY ventured to publish a collection of panegyrics on himself — and thus gravely stepped into a niche erected to Vanity. At length he and his two brothers, one a divine and the other a physician, became students of astronomy; but then an astronomer usually ended in an almanack maker, and above all, in an astrologer; — an avocation which tempted a man to become a prophet. Their "Sharpe and learned judgment on Earthquakes" drove the people out of their senses (says Wood); but when nothing happened of their predictions, the brothers received a severe castigation from those great enemies of prophets, the wits. The buffoon, Tarleton, celebrated for his extempore humour, jested on them at the theatre; Elderton,

a drunken ballad-maker, "consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing in bear-baiting them with bundles of ballads." One on the Earthquake commenced with "Quake! quake! quake!" They made the people laugh at their false terrors, or, as NASH humorously describes their fanciful panic, "when they sweated and were not a haire the worse." Thus were the three learned brothers beset by all the town-wits; Gabriel had the hardihood, with all undue gravity, to charge pell-mell among the whole knighthood of drollery; a circumstance probably alluded to by SPENSER, in a Sonnet addressed to HARVEY:

"HARVEY, the happy above happier men,
I read; that sitting like a looker-on
Of this worlde's stage, dost note with *critique pen*
The sharp dislikes of each condition;
And, as one carelesse of suspition,

Ne fawnest for the favour of the great;
Ne fearest foolish reprehension
Of faulty men, which daunger to thee threat,
But freely doest of what thee list, entreat,
Like a great lord of peerlesse liberty.—"

The "foolish reprehension of faulty men, threatening HARVEY with danger," describes that gregarious herd of town-wits in the age of Elizabeth; Kit Marlow, Robert Greene, Dekker, Nash, &c.; men of no moral principle, of high passions, and the most pregnant Lucianic wits who ever flourished at one period*. Unfortunately for the learned HARVEY, his "critique pen," which is strange in so polished

* HARVEY, in the title-page of his "Pierce's Supererogation," has placed an emblematic wood-cut, expressive of his own confidence, and his contempt of the wits. It is a lofty palm-tree, with its durable and impenetrable trunk; at its feet lie a heap of

a mind and so curious a student, indulged a sharpness of invective which would have been peculiar to himself, had his adversary, NASH, not quite outdone him. Marsyas did not endure a more memorable flaying from the divinity of wit, than was inflicted on HARVEY by NASH. He was ridiculed to his grave! Their pamphlets foamed against each other, till NASH, in his vehement invective, involved the whole generation of the HARVEYS, made one brother more ridiculous than the other, and even attainted the fair name of Gabriel's respectable sister. Gabriel, indeed, after the death of ROBERT GREENE, the

serpents, darting their tongues, and filthy toads, in vain attempting to pierce or to pollute it. The Italian motto, wreathed among the branches of the palm, declares, *Il vostro malignare non giova nulla*; Your malignity avails nothing.

crony of NASH, sitting like a vampire on his grave, sucked blood from his corpse, in a memorable narrative of the debaucheries and miseries of this town-wit. I throw into the note the most awful satirical address I ever read*. It became necessary to dry up the floodgates of these rival ink-horns, by an order of the Arch-

* Among those Sonnets, in HARVEY'S "Foure Letters, and certaine Sonnets, especially touching ROBERT GREENE and other parties by him abused, 1592," there is one, which, with great originality of conception, has an equal vigour of style, and causticity of satire, on ROBERT GREENE'S death. JOHN HARVEY the physician, who had died before, is thus made to address the town-wit, and the libeller of himself and his family. If Gabriel was the writer of this singular Sonnet, as he undoubtedly is of the verses to Spenser, subscribed Hobynol, it must be confessed he is a Poet, which he never appears in his English hexameters :—

bishop of Canterbury. The order is a remarkable fragment of our literary history, and is thus expressed; "that all NASHE's bookes and Dr. HARVEY's bookes be taken wheresoever they may be found, and that none of the said bookes be ever printed hereafter."

This extraordinary circumstance ac-

JOHN HARVEY the Physician's Welcome to ROBERT GREENE!

"Come, fellow GREENE, come to thy gaping grave,
Bid Vanity and Foolery farewell,
That ouerlong hast plaid the mad-brained knaue,
And ouerloud hast rung the bawdy bell.
Vermine to vermine must repair at last;
No fitter house for busie folke to dwell;
Thy conny-catching pageants are past *,
Some other must those arrant stories tell:

* Greene had written "The Art of Coney-catching," a great adept in the arts of a town-life.

counts for the excessive rarity of HARVEY's "Foure Letters, 1592," and that literary scourge of NASH's, "Have with you to Saffron-Walden (Harvey's residence), or Gabriel Harvey's hunt is vp, 1596;" pamphlets now as costly as if they consisted of leaves of gold.

I now proceed to give some account of this literary invective. NASH, who, in his other works, writes in a style as flowing as Addison's, without an obsolete vestige, has rather injured the present composition, by the evident burlesque he affects of

These hungry wormes thinke long for their repast;
Come on; I pardon thy offence to me;
It was thy living; be not so aghast!
A Fool and a Physitian may agree!
And for my brothers never vex thyself;
They are not to disease a buried elfe."

HARVEY's pedantic idiom; and for this Mr. Malone has hastily censured him, without recollecting the aim of this modern Lucian*. The delicacy of irony; the *sous-entendu*, that subtilty of indicating what is not told; all that poignant satire, which is the keener for its polish, were not practised by our first vehement satir-

* NASH was a great favourite with the Wits of his day. One calls him "our true English Aretine," another, "Sweet satyric Nash," a third describes his Muse as "armed with a gag-tooth (a tusk), and his pen possessed with Hercules's furies." He is well characterised in "The Return from Parnassus."

"His style was witty, tho' he had some gall;
Something he might have mended, so may all!
Yet this I say, that for *a mother's wit*,
Few men have ever seen the like of it."

NASH abounds with "Mother-wit;" but he was also educated at the University, with every advantage of classical studies.

ists; but a bantering masculine humour, a style stamped in the heat of fancy, with all the life-touches of strong individuality, characterise these licentious wits. They wrote then as the old *fabliers* told their tales, naming every thing by its name; our refinement cannot approve, but it cannot diminish their real nature, and among our elaborate graces, their *naiveté* must be still wanting.

In this literary satire NASH has interwoven a kind of ludicrous biography of HARVEY; and seems to have anticipated the character of Martinus Scriblerus. I leave the grosser parts of this invective untouched; for my business is not with *slander*, but with *ridicule*.

He opens as a skilful lampooner; he knew well that ridicule, without the ap-

pearance of Truth, was letting fly an arrow upwards, touching no one. NASH accounts for his protracted silence by adroitly declaring, that he had taken these two or three years to get perfect intelligence of Harvey's

"Life and conversation; one true point whereof well sat downe will more excruciate him than *knocking him about the ears with his own style* in a hundred sheets of paper."

And with great humour says,

"As long as it is, since he writ against me, so long have I given him a lease of his life, and he hath only held it by my mercy; and now let him thank his friends for this heavy load of disgrace I lay upon him, since I do it but to shew my sufficiency; and they urging what a triumph he had over me, hath made me ransack my standish more than I would."

In the history of such a literary hero as Gabriel, the birth has ever been attended by portents. Gabriel's mother "dreamt a dream," that she was delivered "of an immense elder-gun, that can shoot nothing but pellets of chewed paper, and thought, instead of a boy, she was brought to bed of one of those kistrell birds, called a Wind-sucker." At the moment of his birth came into the world "a calf with a double tongue and eares, longer than any asse's, with his feet turned backwards." Facetious analogies of Gabriel's literary genius!

He now paints to the life the grotesque portrait of HARVEY; so that the man himself stands alive before us.—"He was of an adust swarth choleric dye, like restie bacon, or a dried scate-fish; his skin riddled and

crumpled like a piece of burnt parchment, with channels and creases in his face, and wrinkles and frets of old age."—Nash dexterously attributes this premature old age to his own talents,—exulting humourously,

" I have brought him low, and shrewdly broken him; look on his head, and you shall find a gray haire for euerie line I have writ against him; and you shall haue all his beard white too by the time he hath read ouer this booke."

To give a finishing to the portrait, and to reach the climax of personal contempt, he paints the sordid misery in which he lived at Saffron-Walden:

" Enduring more hardness than a camell, who will liue four dayes without water, and feedes on nothing but thistles and wormwood, as he feeds on his estate on trotters, sheep-

porknells, and buttered rootes, in an hexameter meditation."

In his Venetian velvet and pantofles of Pride, we are told,

"He looks, indeed, like a case of tooth-pickes, or a lute-pin stuck in a suit of apparell. An Vsher of a dancing schoole, he is such a *basia de vmbra de vmbra de los pedes;* a kisser of the shadow of your feetes shadow he is!"

This is, doubtless, a portrait resembling the original, with its Cervantic touches; NASH would not have risked what the eyes of his readers would instantly have proved to be fictitious; and, in fact, though the *Grangerites* know of no portrait of GABRIEL HARVEY, they will find a wooden cut of him by the side of this description; it is, indeed, in a most pitiable attitude, expressing that gripe of criticism which

seized on Gabriel "upon the news of the going in hand of my booke."

The ponderosity and prolixity of Gabriel's "period of a mile," are described with a facetious extravagance, which may be given as a specimen of the eloquence of Ridicule. HARVEY intituled his various pamphlets "Letters." —

"More letters yet from the Doctor? Out upon it, here's a packet of Epistling, as bigge as a packe of woollen cloth, or a stack of salt fish. Carrier, didst thou bring it by wayne, or by horsebacke? By wayne, Sir, and it hath crackt me three axle-trees. — *Heavie* newes! —Take them again! I will never open them. —My cart (quoth he deep-sighing) hath cryde creake under them fortie times euerie furlong; wherefore if you be a good man rather make mud-walls with them, mend highways, or damme up quagmires with them. —

"When I came to unrip and unbumbast this *Gargantuan* bag pudding, and found nothing in it but dogs tripes, swines livers, oxe galls, and sheepes guts, I was in a bitterer chafe than anie cooke at a long sermon, when his meat burnes. —

"O 'tis an vnsconscionable vast gor-bellied volume, bigger bulkt than a Dutch hoy, and more cumbersome than a payre of Switzer's galeaze breeches."

And in the same ludicrous style he writes,

"One epistle thereof to John Wolfe (Harvey's Printer) I took and weighed in an Ironmonger's scale, and it counter poyseth a cade * of herrings with three Holland cheeses. It was rumoured about the Court that the guard meant to trie masteries with it before the Queene, and instead of throwing the sledge, or

* A cade is 500 herrings; a great quantity of an article of no value!

the hammer, to hurle it foorth at the armes end for a wager.

"Sixe and thirtie sheets it comprehendeth, which with him is but sixe and thirtie full points (periods); for he makes no more difference 'twixt a sheet of paper and a full pointe, than there is twixt two black puddings for a pennie, and a pennie for a pair of black puddings. Yet these are but the shortest prouerbes of his wit, for he never bids a man good morrow, but he makes a speech as long as a proclamation, nor drinkes to anie, but he reads a lecture of three howers long, *de Arte bibendi.* O 'tis a precious apothegmatical pedant."

It was the foible of HARVEY to wish to conceal the humble avocation of his Father: this forms a perpetual source of the bitterness or the pleasantry of NASH, who, indeed, calls his pamphlet "a full answer to the eldest son of the halter-maker," which, he says, "is death to Gabriel

to remember; wherefore from time to time he doth nothing but turmoile his thoughts how to invent new pedigrees, and what great nobleman's bastard he was likely to be, not whose sonne he is reputed to be. Yet he would not have a shoo to put on his foote if his father had not traffiqued with the hangman. — Harvey nor his brothers cannot bear to be called the sonnes of a rope-maker, which by his private confession to some of my friends, was the only thing that most set him afire against me. Turne over his two bookes he hath published against me, wherein he hath clapt paper God's plentie, if that could press a man to death, and see if, in the waye of answer, or otherwise, he once mention *the word rope-maker*, or come within forty foot of it; except in one place of his first booke, where he nameth it not

neither, but goes thus cleanly to worke :— 'and may not a good sonne have a reprobate for his father?' a periphrase of a ropemaker, which, if I should shryue myself, I never heard before." According to NASH, Gabriel took his oath before a justice that his father was an honest man, and kept his sons at the Universities a long time. "I confirmed it, and added, Ay! which is more, three proud sonnes, that when they met the hangman, their father's best customer, would not put off their hats to him —"

Such repeated raillery on this foible of HARVEY touched him more to the quick, and raised the public laugh, than any other point of attack; for it was merited. Another foible was, perhaps, the finical richness of HARVEY's dress, adopting the Italian fashions on his return from Italy,

" when he made no bones of taking the wall of Sir Philip Sidney, in his black Venetian velvet." On this the fertile invention of NASH raises a scandalous anecdote concerning Gabriel's wardrobe; " a tale of his hobby-horse reuelling and domineering at Audley-end, when the Queen was there; to which place Gabriel came ruffling it out, hufty tufty, in his suit of veluet —" which he had " untrussed, and pelted the outside from the lining of an old velvet saddle he had borrowed!" — " The rotten mould of that worm-eaten relique, he means, when he dies, to hang it over his tomb for a monument *." HARVEY was

* This unlucky Venetian velvet coat of HARVEY's had also produced a " quippe for an Vpstart Courtier, or a quaint dispute betweene Veluet-breeches and Cloth-breeches," which poor HARVEY declares was

proud of his refined skill in "Tuscan authors," and too fond of their worse conceits. NASH alludes to his travels in Italy, "to fetch him two pennyworth of Tuscanism, quite renouncing his natural English accents and gestures, wrested himself wholly to the Italian punctilios, painting himself like a courtezan, till the Queen declared, "he looked something like an Italian!" At which he roused his plumes, pricked his ears, and run away with the bridle betwixt his teeth." These were malicious tales, to make his adversary contemptible, whenever the merry wits at court were willing to sharpen themselves on him.

"one of the most licentious and intolerable invectives." This blow had been struck by GREENE on the "Italianated" Courtier.

One of the most difficult points of attack was to break through that bastion of sonnets and panegyrics with which HARVEY had fortified himself by the aid of his friends, against the assaults of NASH. HARVEY had been commended by the learned or the ingenious. Our Lucian, with his usual adroitness, gets rid of the suffrage of the Great, since he could not deny HARVEY's intimacy with Spenser and Sidney, by this malicious sarcasm, "it is a miserable thing for a man to be said to have had friends, and now to have neer a one left!" — As for the others, whom HARVEY calls "his gentle and liberall friends," NASH boldly caricatures the grotesque crew, as "tender itchie brained infants, that cared not what they did, so they might come in print; worthless whippets, and jackstraws, who meeter it in his

commendation, whom he would compare with the highest." The works of these young writers he describes by an image exquisitely ludicrous and satirical:

"These mushrumpes, who pester the world with their pamphlets, are like those barbarous people in the hot countries, who, when they have bread to make, doe no more than clap the dowe upon a post on the outside of their houses, and there leave it to the sun to bake; so their indigested conceipts, far rawer than anie dowe, at all adventures upon the post they clap, pluck them off who will, and think they have made as good a batch of poetrie as may be."

Of HARVEY's list of friends he observes, "To a bead-roll of learned men and lords, he appeals, whether he be an asse or no?"—HARVEY had said, "Thomas NASH, from the top of his wit looking down upon simple

creatures, calleth Gabriel Harvey a dunce, a foole, an ideot, a dolt, a goose-cap, an asse, and so forth; for some of the residue is not to be spoken but with his owne mannerly mouth; but he should have shewed particularlie which wordes in my Letters were the wordes of a dunce; which sentences the sentences of a foole; which arguments the arguments of an ideot; which opinions the opinions of a dolt; which judgments the judgments of a goose-cap; which conclusions the conclusions of an asse *."

Thus Harvey reasons, till he becomes unreasonable; one would have imagined that the literary satires of our English Lucian had been voluminous enough, without the mathematical demonstration. The banterers seem to have put poor

* Pierce's Supererogation, or a new praise of the Old Asse, 1593.

HARVEY nearly out of his wits; he and his friends felt their blows too profoundly; they were much too thin-skinned, and the solemn air of HARVEY in his graver moments at their menaces is extremely ludicrous. They frequently called him *Gabrielissime Gabriel,* which quintessence of himself seems to have mightily affected him. They threatened to confute his letters till eternity — which seems to have put him in despair. The following passage, descriptive of Gabriel's distresses, may excite a smile.

"This grand confuter of my letters says, 'Gabriel, if there be any wit or industrie in thee, now I will dare it to the vttermost; write of what thou wilt, in what language thou wilt, and I will confute it, and answere it. Take Truth's part, and I will proouve truth to be no truth, marching ovt of thy dung-voiding mouth.'

He will never leave me as long as he is able to lift a pen, *ad infinitum*; if I reply, he has a rejoinder; and for my brief *triplication*, he is prouided with a *quadruplication*, and so he mangles my sentences, hacks my arguments, wrenches my words, chops and changes my phrases, even to the disjoyning and dislocation of my whole meaning."

Poor HARVEY! he knew not that there was *nothing real* in Ridicule; *no end* to its merry malice!

HARVEY'S taste for hexameter verses, which he so unnaturally forced into our language, is admirably ridiculed. Harvey had shewn his taste for these metres, by a variety of poems, to whose subjects NASH thus sarcastically alludes:

"It had grown with him into such a dictionary custom, that no may-pole in the street, no wether-cocke on anie church-steeple, no arbour, no lawrell, no yewe-tree, he would ouer-

skip, without hayling in this manner. After supper, if he chanest to play at cards with a queen of harts in his hands, he would run upon men's and women's hearts all the night."

And he happily introduces here one of the miserable hexameter conceits of HARVEY.

"Stout hart and sweet hart, yet stoutest hart
to be stooped."

HARVEY'S *Encomium Lauri* thus ridiculously commences

"What might I call this tree? A lawrell? O
bonny lawrell,
Needes to thy bowes will I bow this knee, and
vayle my bonetto;"

which *Nash* most happily burlesques by describing HARVEY under a yew-tree at Trinity-hall, composing verses on the weather-cock of Allhallows in Cambridge:

"O thou wether-cocke that stands on the top of All-hallows,
Come thy waies down, if thou darst, for thy crowne, and take the wall on us."

"The hexameter verse (says *Nash*) I graunt to be a gentleman of an auncient house, (so is many an English beggar), yet this clyme of our's hee cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; hee goes twitching and hopping in our language, like a man running vpon quagmires, vp the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins."

The most humourous part in this *Scribleriad*, is a ludicrous narrative of HARVEY's expedition to the metropolis, for the sole purpose of writing his "Pierce's Supererogation," pitted against NASH's

"Pierce Pennilesse." The facetious NASH describes the torpor and pertinacity of his genius, by telling us he had kept HARVEY at work,

"For seaven and thirtie weekes space while he lay at his printer's, Wolfe, never stirring out of doors, or being churched all that while — and that in the deadest season that might bee, hee lying in the ragingest furie of the last plague where there dyde above 1600 a weeke in London, ink-squittring and saracenically printing against mee. Three quarters of a year thus immured hee remained, with his spirits yearning empassionment, and agonised fury, thirst of revenge, neglecting soul and bodies health to compasse it — sweating and dealing upon it most intentively."

The narrative proceeds with the many perils which Harvey's printer encountered, by expence of diet, and printing for this bright genius and his friends, whose works "would

rust and iron-spot paper to have their names breathed over it;" and that Wolfe designed "to get a privilege betimes, forbidding of all others to sell waste-paper but himselfe." The climax of the narrative, after many misfortunes, end with HARVEY being arrested by the Printer, and confined to Newgate, where "his sword is taken from him, to his perpetual disgrace." So much did Gabriel endure for having written a book against TOM NASH!

But HARVEY might deny some of these ludicrous facts—Will he deny, cries NASH—and here he has woven every tale the most watchful malice could collect, varnished for their full effect. Then he adds,

"You see I have brought the Doctor out of request at Court; and it shall cost me a fall, but I will get him howted out of the

Vniuersitie too, ere I giue him ouer." He tells us HARVEY was brought on the Stage at Trinity-college, in the exquisite Comedie of *Pedantius*, where, under "the finical fine schoolmaster, the just manner of his phrase, they stufft his mouth with, and the whole buffianisme throughout his bookes, they bolstered out his part with—euen to the carrying of his gowne, his nice gate in his pantofles, or the affected accent of his speech — Let him deny that there was a shewe made at Clare-hall of him and his brothers, called

Tarrarantantara turba tumultuosa Trigonum
Tri-Harueyorum Tri-harmonia;

and another shewe of the little minnow his brother, at Peters house, called

Duns furens, Dick Haruey in a frensie.

Whereupon Dick came and broke the college glass windows, and Dr. Perne caused him to be set in the stockes till the shewe was ended."

This "Duns furens, Dick Harvey in a frensie," was himself a learned professor, the brother of one who ranked high in society and literature. NASH describes him as "Pigmey Dick, that lookes like a pound of goldsmiths' candles, who had like to commit folly last year with a milk-maid, as a friend of his very soberly informed me. Little, and little-wittied Dick that hath vowed to live and die in defence of Brutus and his Trojans*." An Herculean feat of this "Duns furens," Nash tells us, was his setting Aristotle with his heels upwards on the school gates at Cambridge, and putting asses ears on his head, which Tom

* He had written an antiquarian work on the descent of Brutus on our island.—The party also, who at the University attacked the opinions of Aristotle, were nick-named the *Trojans*, as determined enemies of the *Greeks*.

here records in *perpetuam rei memoriam.* But Wood, our grave and keen literary antiquary, observes,

"To let pass other matters these vain men (the wits) report of Richard Harvey, his works shew him quite another person than what they make him to be."

Nash then forms a ludicrous contrast between "witless Gabriel and ruffling Richard." The astronomer Richard was continually baiting the great bear in the firmament, and in his lectures set up atheistical questions, which Nash maliciously adds, "as I am afraid the earth would swallow me, if I should but rehearse." And at his close Nash bitterly regrets he has no more room; "else I should make Gabriel a fugitive out of England, being the rauenousest slouen that ever lapt porredge in noblemen's houses, where he has

had already, out of two, his mittimus of Ye may be gone! for he was a sower of seditious paradoxes amongst kitchin-boys." NASH seems to have considered himself as terrible as an Archilochus, whose satires were so fatal as to induce the satirized, after having read them, to hang themselves.

How ill poor HARVEY passed through these wit-duels, and how profoundly the wounds inflicted on him and his brothers were felt, appears by his own confessions. In his "Foure Letters," after some curious observations on invectives and satires, from those of Archilochus, Lucian, and Aretine, to Skelton and Scoggin, and

"the whole venemous and viperous brood of old and new raylers," he proceeds to blame even his beloved friend the gentle SPENSER, for the severity of his "Mother Hubbard's

tale," a satire on the court. "I must needes say, Mother Hubbard in heat of choller, forgetting the pure sanguine of her Sweete Feary Queene, artfully ouershott her malcontent-selfe; as elsewhere I have specified at large, with the good leaue of vnspotted friendship. — Sallust and Clodius learned of Tully to frame artificiall declamations and patheticall invectives against Tully himselfe; if Mother Hubbard, in the vaine of Chawcer, happen to tel one canicular tale, father Elderton and his son Greene, in the vaine of Skelton or Scoggin, will counterfeit an hundred dogged fables, libles, slaunders, lies, for the whetstone. But many will sooner lose their liues than the least jott of their reputation. What mortal feudes, what cruel bloodshed, what terrible slaughterdome have been committed for the point of honour and some few courtly ceremonies."

The incidents so plentifully narrated in this Lucianic biography, the very nature of this species of satire throws into doubt; yet they still seem shadowed out from some truths; but the truths who can unravel from the fictions? And thus a narrative is consigned to posterity, which involves illustrious characters in an inextricable net-work of calumny and genius.

In these copious extracts I have not noticed the more criminal insinuations against the HARVEYS. Writers of this class have alienated themselves from human kind, they have broken that golden bond which holds them to society; and they live among us like a polished banditti. I have left the grosser slanders untouched; I would only trace the effects of Ridicule, and detect its artifices, by which the most dignified characters may be

deeply injured, at the pleasure of a Ridiculer, by aggravating and taunting real imperfections, and fastening imaginary ones upon them; and thus the wild mirth of Ridicule, from idle sport or ill humour, strikes at the most brittle thing in the world, a man's good reputation, for delicate matters which are not under the protection of the law; but in which so much of the happiness of man is concerned.

LITERARY HATRED.

Exhibiting a Conspiracy against an Author.

In the peaceful walks of literature, we are startled at discovering genius, with the mind, and, if we conceive the instrument it guides to be a stiletto, with the hand, of an Assassin; irascible, vindictive, armed with indiscriminate satire, and never pardoning the merit of rival genius, but fastening on it throughout life, till, in the moral retribution of human nature, these very passions, by their ungratified cravings, have tended to annihilate the being who fostered them. These passions among literary men, are with none more inextinguishable than among *provincial writers*.—Their bad feelings acquire a re-

doubled energy from their local contraction. To one of this unhappy turn of temper, the proximity of men of genius seems to produce a familiarity which excites hatred or contempt; the man afflicted with this disordered passion, imagines he is urging his own claims to genius, by denying them to their possessor. But to devote a whole life in harassing the industry or the genius which he has not obtained; instead of running the open career with them, as a competitor, with the same rapidity, only skulking close on them as an assassin—this character, indeed, with a purer mind, would have been genius or industry. As it is, the heart of this unhappy being, raging like a volcano, at length burns out, and, in its extinct state, only leaves the recollection of its ravages on itself.

Such a character was the Author now before us. Dr. GILBERT STUART seems early in life to have devoted himself to literature; but his habits were irregular, and his passions fierce. The celebrity of ROBERTSON, BLAIR, and HENRY, with other Scottish writers, diseased his mind with a most envious rancour. He confined all his literary efforts to the pitiable motive of destroying theirs; and the fact is, that he was prompted to every one of his historical works by the mere desire of discrediting some work of Robertson; and his numerous critical labours, were directed to annihilate all the genius of his country. How he converted his life into its own scourge, wasted talents he might have cultivated into perfection, lost every trace of humanity, and finally perished, devoured by his own fiend-like passions; shall be illustrated by the fol-

lowing narrative, collected from a correspondence now lying before me, which the Author carried on for several years with his publisher in London. I shall copy out at some length, the hopes and disappointments of the literary adventurer—the colours are not mine; I am dipping my pencil in the pallet of the artist himself.

In June 1773 was commenced the project of "The Edinburgh Magazine and Review." Stuart's letters breathe the spirit of rapturous confidence, and the first volumes were executed with more talent than the periodical publications of those times had shewn. Stuart had combined the sedulous attention of the intelligent Smellie, who was also the printer; and the Review department was divided among them and some very honourable critics; Professor Baron, Dr. Blacklock,

and Professor Richardson. But the genius of Stuart had not yet betrayed itself to his colleagues; the hardiness of his opinions, his offensive attacks on the Clergy (and that in a country of Presbyters), and the flowing acrimony of his literary libels, indeed, presented a new feature in Scottish literature, but of such ugliness and horror, that every honourable man soon averted his face from this *Boutefeu*.

He designed to ornament his first number with

"A print of my Lord Monboddo in his quadruped form. I must therefore most earnestly beg that you will purchase for me a copy of it in some of the Macaroni-print shops. It is not to be procured at Edinburgh. They are afraid to vend it here. We are to take it on the footing of a figure of an animal, not yet described; and are to give a grave,

yet satirical account of it, in the manner of Buffon. It would not be proper to allude to his Lordship, but in a very distant manner."

It was not, however, ventured on—and the non-descript animal was still confined to the windows of "the macaroni-print shops;"—it was however the bloom of the Author's fancy, and promised all the mellow fruits it afterwards produced.

In September this ardour did not abate.

"The proposals are issued; the subscriptions in the booksellers shops astonish; correspondents flock in; and, what will surprise you, the timid proprietors of the Scots Magazine have come to the resolution of dropping their work. You stare at all this, and so do I too."

Thus he flatters himself he is to annihilate his rival, without even striking the first blow; the appearance of his first number, is to be the moment when their last is to come forth! Authors, like the

discoverers of mines, are the most sanguine creatures in the world; Gilbert Stuart afterwards flattered himself Dr. Henry was lying at the point of death, from the scalping of his tomahawk pen—but of this anon!

On the publication of the first number in November 1773, all is exultation; and an account is facetiously expected that "a thousand copies had emigrated from the Row, and Fleet-street."

There is a serious composure in the letter of December, which seems to be occasioned by the tempered answer of his London Correspondent. The work was more suited to the meridian of Edinburgh; and from causes sufficiently obvious, its personality and causticity. Stuart, however, assures his friend, that "the second number you will find better than the first, and the third better than the second."

The next letter is dated March 4, 1774, in which I find our Author still in good spirits.

"The Magazine rises, and promises much, in this quarter. Our Artillery has silenced all opposition. The rogues of the 'uplifted hands' decline the combat." These rogues are the Clergy; and some others, who had "uplifted hands" from the vituperative nature of their adversary; for he tells us, that "now the Clergy are silent, the Town-council have had the presumption to oppose us; and have threatened Creech (the publisher in Edinburgh) with the terror of making him a constable, for his insolence. A pamphlet on the abuses of Heriot's hospital, including a direct proof of perjury in the Provost, was the punishment inflicted in return. And new papers are forging to chastise them in regard to the poor's rate, which is again started; the improper choice of Professors; and violent

stretches of the impost. The *Liberty of the Press* in its fullest extent is to be employed against them."

Such is the language of Reform, and the spirit of a Reformist! A little private malignity, thus ferments a good deal of public spirit—but patriotism must be independent, to be pure. If the Edinburgh Review continues to succeed in its sale, as Stuart fancies, Edinburgh itself may be in some danger. His perfect contempt of his contemporaries is amusing;

"Monboddo's second volume is published, and, with Kaimes, will appear in our next; the former is a childish performance; the latter rather better. We are to treat them with a good deal of freedom. I observe an amazing falling off in the English Reviews. We beat them hollow. I fancy they have no assistance but from the Dissenters, a dull body of men. The Monthly will not easily

recover the death of Hawkesworth; and I suspect that Langhorne has forsaken them—for I see no longer his pen."

We are now hastening to the sudden, and the moral catastrophe of our tale. The thousand copies the author flattered his genius with emigrating to London, remained here in an innocent state, little disturbed by public enquiry; the personal animosity against almost every literary character in Scotland, which had inflamed the sale, became naturally the latent cause of its extinction; for its life there had but a feverish existence, and its florid complexion carried with it the seeds of its dissolution. Stuart at length quarrelled with his coadjutor Smellie, for altering his Reviews, and whose prudential dexterity was such, that in an article designed to level Lord Kaimes with Lord

Monboddo, the whole libel was completely metamorphosed into a panegyric. They were involved in a law-suit about "a blasphemous paper." And now the enraged Zoilus complains of "his hours of peevishness and dissatisfaction." He acknowledges that "a circumstance had happened, which had broke his peace and ease altogether for some weeks." And now he resolves that this great work shall quietly sink into a mere compilation from the London periodical works. Such then is the progress of malignant genius! The Author, like Phalaris, is writhing in that machine of tortures he had invented for others.

We now come to a very remarkable passage — it is the frenzied language of disappointed wickedness!

" 17 *June*, 1774.

" It is an infinite disappointment to me, that the Magazine does not grow in London; I thought the soil had been richer. But it is my constant fate to be disappointed in every thing I attempt; I do not think I ever had a wish that was gratified; and never dreaded an event that did not come. With this felicity of fate, I wonder how the devil I could turn projector. I am now sorry that I left London; and the moment that I have money enough to carry me back to it, I shall set off. *I mortally detest and abhor this place, and every body in it.* Never was there a city where there was so much pretension to knowledge, and that had so little of it. The solemn foppery, and the gross stupidity of the Scottish literati, are perfectly insupportable. I shall drop my idea of a Scots Newspaper. Nothing will do in this country that has common sense in it; only cant, hypocrisy, and superstition, will

flourish here. *A curse on the country, and all the men, women, and children of it!*"

Again — "The publication is too good for the country. There are very few men of taste or erudition on this side the Tweed. Yet every idiot one meets with, lays claim to both. Yet the success of the Magazine is in reality greater than we could expect, considering that we have every Clergyman in the kingdom to oppose it; and that the Magistracy of the place are every moment threatening its destruction."

And, therefore, this recreant Scot, anathematizes the Scottish people! for not rendering fashionable, blasphemy, calumny, and every species of literary criminality. Such are the monstrous passions that swell out the poisonous breast of genius, deprived of every moral restraint; and such was the demoniac irritability

which prompted a wish in Collot d' Herbois to set fire to the four quarters of the city of Lyons; while, in his "tender mercies," the kennels of the streets were running with the blood of its inhabitants —remembering still that the Lyonese had, when he was a miserable actor, hissed him off the stage!

STUART curses his country, and retreats to London. Fallen, but not abject; repulsed, but not altered; degraded, but still haughty. No change of place could operate any in his heart. He was born in literary crime, and he perished in it. It was now "The English Review" was instituted, with his idol Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, and others. He says, "to Whitaker he assigns the palm of history in preference to Hume and Robertson." I have heard that he considered

himself higher than Whitaker, and ranked himself with Montesquieu. He negotiated for Whitaker and himself a doctor of laws degree; and they were now in the titular possession of all the fame which a dozen pieces could bestow! But to return to "The English Review," in which broke forth all the genius of STUART in an unnatural warfare of Scotchmen in London against Scotchmen at Edinburgh. "The bitter herbs," which seasoned it against Blair, Robertson, Gibbon, and the first authors of the age, at first provoked the public appetite, which afterwards indignantly rejected the palatable garbage.

I am now to exhibit the singular spectacle of a *Literary Conspiracy*. It was conducted by STUART, with a pertinacity of invention, perhaps not to be paralleled

in literary history. That he succeeded for a considerable time in destroying the peace of mind of such an industrious author as Dr. HENRY; that Stuart stopped the sale of a work on which Henry had expended much of his fortune and his life; that when the Historian, covered with obloquy and ridicule, in despair left Edinburgh for London, still encountering the same hostility — perhaps was never even known to its victim. The multiplied forms of this Proteus of the Malevoli, were still but one Devil; fire or water, or a bull or a lion; still it was the same Proteus, the same STUART.

From this correspondence I am enabled to collect the commencement and the end of this literary conspiracy, with all its intermediate links. It first appears that,

"25 *Nov.* 1773.

"We have been attacked from different quarters, and Dr. Henry in particular has given a long and a dull defence of his Sermon. I have replied to it, with a degree of spirit, altogether unknown in this country. The reverend historian was perfectly astonished; and has actually invited the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge to arm in his cause! I am about to be persecuted by the whole Clergy, and I am about to persecute them in my turn. They are hot and zealous; I am cool and dispassionate, like a determined sceptic: since I have entered the lists, I must fight; I must gain the victory, or perish like a man."

"13 *Dec.* 1773.

"David Hume wants to review Henry; but that task is so precious that I will undertake it myself. Moses, were he to ask it as a favour, should not have it; yea, not even the man after God's own heart."

"4 *March*, 1774.

"This month Henry is utterly demolished; his sale is stopt, many of his copies are returned; and his old friends have forsaken him; pray in what state is he in London? Henry has delayed his London journey; you cannot easily conceive how exceedingly he is humbled *.

* It may be curious to present Stuart's idea of the literary talents of Henry. Henry's unhappy turn for humour, and a style little accordant with historical dignity, lie fairly open to the critic's animadversion. But the research and application of the writer, which, at that day, were considerable, extracted high commendations. But we are told that "he neither furnishes entertainment nor instruction. Diffuse, vulgar, and ungrammatical, he strips history of all her ornaments. As an antiquary, he wants accuracy and knowledge; and, as an historian, he is destitute of fire, taste, and sentiment. His work is a gazette, in which we find actions and events, without their causes; and in which we meet with the names,

"I wish I could transport myself to London to review him for the Monthly. A fire there, and in the Critical, would perfectly annihilate him. Could you do nothing in the latter? To the former I suppose David Hume has transcribed the Criticism he intended for us. It is precious, and would divert you. I keep a proof of it in my cabinet, for the amusement of friends. This great philosopher begins to doat *."

Stuart prepares to assail Henry, on his arrival in London, from various quarters

without the characters, of personages. — He has amassed all the refuse and lumber of the times he would record." Stuart never imagined that the time would arrive, when the name of Henry would be familiar to English readers, and by many that of Stuart would not be recollected.

* The Critique on Henry, in the Monthly Review, was written by Hume — and, because the philosopher was candid, he is here said to have doated.

— to lower the value of his history in the estimation of the purchasers.

"21 *March*, 1774.

"To-morrow morning Henry sets off for London, with immense hopes of selling his History. I wish he had delayed till our last Review of him had reached your city. But I really suppose that he has little probability of getting any gratuity. The trade are too sharp to give precious gold for perfect nonsense. I wish sincerely that I could enter Holborn the same hour with him. He should have a repeated fire to combat with. I intreat that you may be so kind as to let him feel some of your thunder. I shall never forget the favour. If Whitaker is in London, he could give a blow. Paterson will give him a knock. Strike by all means. The wretch will tremble, grow pale, and return with a consciousness of his debility. I intreat I may hear from you a day or two after you have seen

him. He will complain grievously of me to Strahan and Rose. I shall send you a paper about him; an advertisement from Parnassus, in the manner of Boccalini."

"*March*, 1774.

"Dr. Henry has by this time reached you. I think you ought to pay your respects to him in the Morning Chronicle. If you would only transcribe his jests, it would make him perfectly ridiculous. See for example, what he says of St. Dunstan. A word to the wise."

"*March* 27, 1774.

"I have a thousand thanks to give you for your insertion of the paper in the London Chronicle; and for the part you propose to act in regard to Henry. I could wish that you knew for certain his being in London before you strike the first blow. An inquiry at Cadell's will give this. When you have an enemy to attack, I shall in return give my best assistance, and aim at him a mortal blow, and

rush forward to his overthrow, though the flames of hell should start up to oppose me.

" It pleases me, beyond what I can express, that Whitaker has an equal contempt for Henry. The idiot threatened, when he left Edinburgh, that he would find a method to manage the Reviews, and that he would oppose their panegyric to our censure. Hume has behaved ill in the affair, and I am preparing to chastise him. You may expect a series of papers in the Magazine, pointing out a multitude of his errors, and ascertaining his ignorance of English history. It was too much for my temper to be assailed both by infidels and believers. My pride could not submit to it. I shall act in my defence with a spirit which it seems they have not expected."

" 11 *April*, 1774.

" I received, with infinite pleasure, the annunciation of the great man into the capital. It is forcible and excellent; and you

have my best thanks for it. You improve amazingly. The poor creature will be stupified with amazement. Inclosed is a paper for him. Boccalini will follow. I shall fall upon a method to let David know Henry's transaction about his Review. It is mean to the last degree. But what could one expect from the most ignorant and the most contemptible man alive? Do you ever see Macfarlane? He owes me a favour for his History of George III. and would give a fire for the Packet. The idiot is to be Moderator for the ensuing Assembly. It shall not, however, be without opposition.

"Would the paragraph about him from the inclosed leaf of the Edinburgh Review be any disgrace to the Morning Chronicle?"

"*20th May*, 1774.

"Boccalini I thought of transmitting, when the Rev^d^ Historian, for whose use it was intended, made his appearance at Edinburgh.

But it will not be lost. He shall most certainly see it. David's critique was most acceptable. It is a curious specimen in one view of insolent vanity, and in another of contemptible meanness. The old Historian begins to doat, and the new one was never out of dotage."

"3 *April*, 1775.

"I see every day that what is written to a man's disparagement is never forgot nor forgiven. Poor Henry is on the point of death, and his friends declare that I have killed him. I received the information as a compliment, and begged they would not do me so much honour."

But HENRY and his History long survived STUART and his *critiques*; and ROBERTSON, BLAIR, and KAIMES, with others he assailed, have all taken their due ranks in public esteem. What niche does STU-

ART occupy? His historical works possess the shew, without the solidity, of research; hardy paradoxes, and an artificial style of momentary brilliancy, are none of the lasting materials of history. This shadow of "Montesquieu," for he conceived him only to be his fit rival, derived the last consolations of life from an obscure corner of a Burton ale-house — there, in rival potations, with two or three other disappointed authors, they regaled themselves on ale they could not always pay for, and recorded their own literary celebrity, which had never taken place. Some time before his death, his asperity was almost softened by melancholy; with a broken spirit, he reviewed himself; a victim to that unrighteous ambition of literary fame, where he sought to build his grandeur with the ruins of his fellow countrymen;

having prematurely wasted talents which might have been directed to literary eminence. And GILBERT STUART died as he had lived, a victim to intemperance, physical and moral!

UNDUE SEVERITY OF CRITICISM.

Dr. Kenrick — Scott of Amwell.

We have witnessed the malignant influence of illiberal criticism, not only on literary men, but over literature itself, since it is the actual cause of suppressing works which lie neglected, though completed by their authors. The arts of literary condemnation, as they may be practised by men of wit and arrogance, are well known; and it is much less difficult than criminal, to scare the modest man of learning, and to rack the man of genius, through all his tremors, in that bright vision of Authorship sometimes indulged in the calm of their studies; a generous emotion to inspire a generous purpose! With suppressed indignation, shrinking from the press, such

have condemned themselves to a Carthusian silence; but the public will gain as little by silent Authors, as by a community of lazy monks; or a choir of singers who insist they have lost their voice. That undue severity of criticism which diminishes the number of good authors, is a greater calamity than even that mawkish panegyric, which may invite indifferent ones; for the truth is, a bad book produces no great evil in literature; it dies soon, and naturally; and the feeble birth only disappoints its unlucky parent, with a score of idlers, who are the dupes of their rage after novelty. A bad book never sells unless it be addressed to the passions, and, in that case, the severest criticism will never impede its circulation; malignity and curiosity being passions so much stronger and less delicate than taste or truth.

And who are the authors marked out for the attack? Scarcely one of the populace of scribblers; for Wit will not lose one silver shaft on game, which, struck, no one would take up. It must level at the Historian, whose novel researches throw a light in the depths of antiquity; on the Poet, who, addressing himself to the imagination, perishes if that sole avenue to the heart be closed on him. Such are some who have received the criticism which has sent some nervous authors to their graves, and embittered the life of many whose talents we all regard*.

* So sensible was even the calm Newton to critical attacks, that Whiston tells us he lost his favour, which he had enjoyed for twenty years, for contradicting Newton in his old age; for no man was of "a more fearful temper." Whiston declares that he would not have thought proper to have published his

But this species of Criticism, though ungenial and nipping at first, does not always kill the tree which it has frozen over.

In the calamity before us, Time, that great Autocrat, in its tremendous march, who destroys Authors, also annihilates Critics; and acting in this instance with a new kind of benevolence, takes up some

work against Newton's Chronology in his life-time, "because I knew his temper so well, that I should have expected it would have killed him; as Dr. Bentley, Bishop Stillingfleet's chaplain, told me, that he believed Mr. Locke's thorough confutation of the Bishop's metaphysics about the Trinity, hastened his end." Pope writhed in his chair from the light shafts which Cibber darted on him; yet they were not tipped with the poison of the Java-tree. Dr. Hawkesworth *died of Criticism;* a malady which some would make contagious among authors. Singing-birds cannot live in a storm.

who have been violently thrown down, to fix them in their proper place; and Time, daily enfeebling unjust Criticism, has given the promise of his century to a valued, though an injured, Author.

It is, however, lamentable enough that authors must participate in that courage which faces the cannon's mouth, or cease to be authors; for military enterprise is not the taste of modest, retired, and timorous characters. The late Mr. Cumberland used to say, that authors must not be thin-skinned, but shelled like the Rhinoceros; there are, however, more delicately tempered animals among them; new-born lambs, who shudder at a touch, and die under a pressure.

As for those great authors (though the greatest shrink from ridicule) who still retain public favour, they must be patient,

proud, and fearless — patient, of that obloquy which still will stain their honour by the malicious memories of literary echoers, who retain to an epithet the decisions of the malignant and witty Critic; proud, while they are sensible that their literary offspring is not

"Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before its time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up."

SHAKESPEARE'S RICHARD III.

And fearless, of all Critics, when they recollect the reply of Bentley to one who threatened to write him down, that "no author was ever written down but by himself."

An author must consider himself as an arrow shot into the world; his impulse must be stronger than the current of air that carries him on — else he falls!

The character I had proposed to illustrate this calamity was the caustic Dr. KENRICK, who, about thirty years ago, during several years, was, in his "London Review," one of the great disturbers of literary repose. The turn of his criticism; the airiness, or the asperity of his sarcasm; the arrogance with which he treated some of our great authors, would prove very amusing; and serve to display a certain talent of Criticism. The life of KENRICK too would have afforded some wholesome instruction of the morality of a Critic. But the rich materials are not at hand! He was a man of talents, who ran a race with the press; could criticise all the genius of the age faster than it was produced; could make his own malignity look like wit, and turn the wit of others into absurdity, by placing it topsy-turvy.

As thus, when he attacked " The Traveller" of Goldsmith, which he called " a flimsy poem," he discussed the subject as a grave, political pamphlet, condemning the whole system, as raised on false principles. " The Deserted Village" was sneeringly pronounced to be " pretty;" but then it had " neither fancy, dignity, genius, or fire." When he reviewed Johnson's " Tour to the Hebrides," he decrees that the whole book was written " by one who had seen but little," and, therefore, could not be very interesting. His virulent attack on Johnson's Shakespeare, may be preserved for its total want of literary decency; and his " Love in the Suds, a town eclogue," where he has placed Garrick with an infamous character, may be useful to shew how far witty malignity will advance in the violation of moral de-

cency. He libelled all the genius of the age, and was proud of it*. Johnson and Akenside preserved a stern silence; but poor Goldsmith, the child of Nature, could not resist attempting to execute martial law, by caning the Critic; for which being blamed, he published a defence of himself in the papers. I shall transcribe his feelings on KENRICK's excessive and illiberal criticism.

"The law gives us no protection against this injury. The insults we receive before the public, by being more open, are the more

* In one of his own publications he quotes, with great self-complacency, the following lines on himself:

"The Wits who drink water and suck sugar-candy,
Impute the strong spirit of KENRICK to brandy;
They are not so much out; the matter in short is,
He sips *aqua-vitæ*, and spits *aqua-fortis*."

distressing; by treating them with silent contempt, we do not pay a sufficient deference to the opinion of the world. By recurring to legal redress, we too often expose the weakness of the law, which only serves to increase our mortification by failing to relieve us. In short, every man should singly consider himself as a guardian of the liberty of the press, and, as far as his influence can extend, should endeavour to prevent its licentiousness becoming at last the grave of its freedom."

Here then is another calamity arising from the present, which authors bring on themselves by their excessive anxiety, which has thrown them into some extremely ridiculous attitudes; and surprisingly influenced even authors of good sense and temper. Scott of Amwell, the Quaker and Poet, was, doubtless, a modest and amiable man, for Johnson de-

clared "he loved him." When his poems were collected, they were reviewed in the Critical Review; very offensively to the Poet; for the Critic, alluding to the numerous embellishments of the volume, observed, that

"There is a profusion of ornaments and finery about this book, not quite suitable to the plainness and simplicity of the Barclean system; but Mr. Scott is fond of the Muses, and wishes, we suppose, like Captain Macheath, to see his ladies well dressed."

Such was the cold affected witticism of the Critic, whom I intimately knew—and I believe he meant little harm! His friends imagined even that this was the solitary attempt at wit he had ever made in his life; for after a lapse of years, he would still recur to it as an evidence of the felicity of his fancy, and the keenness

of his satire. The truth is, he was a physician, whose name is prefixed as the editor to a great medical compilation, and who never pretended that he had any taste for poetry. His great art of poetical Criticism was always, as Pope expresses a character, "to dwell in decencies;" his acumen, to detect that terrible poetic crime false rhymes, and to employ indefinite terms, which, as they had no precise meaning, were applicable to all things; to commend, occasionally, a passage not always the most exquisite; sometimes to hesitate, while, with delightful candour, he seemed to give up his opinion; to hazard sometimes a positive condemnation on parts which often unluckily proved the most favourite with the poet and the reader. Such was this poetical Reviewer, whom no one disturbed in his

periodical course, till the circumstance of a plain Quaker becoming a poet, and fluttering in the finical ornaments of his book, provoked him from that calm state of innocent mediocrity, into miserable humour, and illiberal Criticism.

The effect, however, this pert criticism had on poor SCOTT, was indeed a calamity. It produced an inconsiderate "Letter to the Critical Reviewers." SCOTT was justly offended at the stigma of Quakerism, applied to the Author of a literary composition; but too gravely accuses the critic of his scurrilous allusion to Macheath, as comparing him to a highwayman — he seems, however, more provoked at the odd account of his poems; he says, "You rank all my poems together as *bad*, then discriminate some as *good*, and, to complete all, re-

commend the volume as *an agreeable and amusing collection.*" Had the Poet been personally acquainted with this tantalizing Critic, he would have comprehended the nature of the Criticism — and certainly would never have replied to it.

The Critic, employing one of his indefinite terms, had said of "Amwell," and some of the early "Elegies," that "they had their share of poetical merit;" he does not venture to assign the proportion of that share, but "the Amœbean and oriental eclogues, odes, epistles, &c. now added, are *of a much weaker feature, and many of them incorrect.*"

Here Scott loses all his dignity as a Quaker and a Poet—he asks what the Critic means by the affected phrase *much weaker feature;* the style, he says, was designed to be somewhat less elevated; and thus addresses the Critic:

"You may, however, be safely defied to pronounce them with truth, deficient either in strength, or melody of versification! They were designed to be, like Virgil's, descriptive of Nature, simple and correct. Had you been disposed to do me justice, you might have observed that in these eclogues I had drawn from the great prototype Nature, much imagery that had escaped the notice of all my predecessors. You might also have remarked, that when I introduced images that had been already introduced by others, still the arrangement or combination of those images was my own. The praise of originality you might at least have allowed me."

As for their *incorrectness!*—Scott points that accusation with a note of admiration, adding, "with whatever defects my works may be chargeable, the last is that of *Incorrectness.*"

We are here involuntarily reminded of Sir Fretful in the Critic,

"I think the interest rather declines in the fourth act.

"Rises! you mean, my dear friend!"

Perhaps the most extraordinary examples of the irritation of a Poet's mind, and a man of amiable temper, are those parts of this letter in which the Author quotes large portions of his poetry, to refute the degrading strictures of the Reviewer.

This was a fertile principle, admitting of very copious extracts; but the ludicrous attitude is that of an Adonis inspecting himself at his mirror.

That provoking see-saw of Criticism, which our learned physician usually adopted in his Critiques, was particularly tantalizing to the Poet of Amwell. The Critic condemns, in the gross, a whole set

of eclogues; but immediately asserts of one of them, that "the whole of it has great poetical merit, and paints its subject in the warmest colours." When he came to review the odes, he discovers that "he does not meet with those polished numbers, nor that freedom and spirit, which that species of poetry requires;" and quotes half a stanza, which he declares is "abrupt and insipid." "From twenty-seven odes!" exclaims the writhing Poet—"are the whole of my lyric productions to be stigmatized for four lines which are flatter than those that preceded them?" But what the Critic could not be aware of, the Poet tells us he designed them to be just what they are. "I knew they were so, when they were first written; but they were thought sufficiently elevated for the place." And then he enters into an inquiry what

the Critic can mean by "polished numbers, freedom, and spirit." The passage is curious.

"By your first criticism, *polished numbers*, if you mean melodious versification, this perhaps the general ear will not deny me. If you mean classical, chaste diction, free from tautologous repetitions of the same thoughts in different expressions; free from bad rhymes, unnecessary epithets, and incongruous metaphors; I believe you may be safely challenged to produce many instances wherein I have failed.

"By *freedom*, your second criterion, if you mean daring transition, or arbitrary and desultory disposition of ideas, however this may be required in the greater ode, it is now, I believe, for the first time, expected in the lesser ode. If you mean that careless, diffuse composition, that conversation-verse, or verse loitering into prose, now so fashion-

able, this is an excellence which I am not very ambitious of attaining. But if you mean strong, concise, yet natural easy expression, I apprehend the general judgment will decide in my favour. To the general ear, and the general judgment, then do I appeal, as to an impartial tribunal." Here several odes are transcribed. "By *spirit*, your third criticism, I know nothing you can mean but enthusiasm; that which transports us to every scene, and interests us in every sentiment. Poetry without this cannot subsist; every species demands its proportion, from the greater ode, of which it is the principal characteristic, to the lesser, in which a small portion of it only has hitherto been thought requisite. My productions, I apprehend, have never before been deemed destitute of this essential constituent. Whatever I have wrote, I have felt, and I believe others have felt it also."

On "the epistles" which had been condemned in the gross, suddenly the Critic turns round courteously to the Bard, declaring "they are written in an easy and familiar style, and seem to flow from a good and a benevolent heart." But then sneeringly adds, that one of them being entitled "An Essay on Painting, addressed to a young Artist," had better have been omitted, because it had been so fully treated in so masterly a manner by Mr. Hayley." This was letting fall a spark in a barrel of gunpowder. SCOTT immediately analyses his brother poet's poem, to shew they have nothing in common; and then compares those similar passages the subject naturally produced, to shew that "his poem does not suffer greatly in the comparison." "You may," he adds,

after giving copious extracts from both poems, " persist in saying that Mr. Hayley's are the best. Your business then is to prove it." This, indeed, had been a very hazardous affair for our medical Critic, whose poetical feelings were so equable, that he acknowledges " Mr. Scott's poem is just and elegant," but " Mr. Hayley's is likewise just and elegant ;" therefore, if one man has written a piece " just and elegant," there is no need of another on the same subject " just and elegant."

To such an extreme point of egotism was a modest and respectable Author most cruelly driven, by the callous playfulness of a poetical Critic, who himself had no sympathy for poetry of any quality or any species, and whose sole art consisted in turning about the canting dictionary of

Criticism. Had Homer been a modern candidate for poetical honours, from him Homer had not been distinguished, even from the mediocrity of Scott of Amwell, whose poetical merits are not, however, slight. In his Amœbean eclogues, he may be distinguished as the poet of Botanists.

A VOLUMINOUS AUTHOR WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

Vast erudition, without the tact of good sense, in a Voluminous Author, what a calamity! for to such a mind no subject can present itself for which he is unprepared to write on, and none at the same time, which he can ever reasonably. The name and the works of William Prynne, have often come under the eye of the reader; but it is even now difficult to discover his real character; for Prynne stood so completely insulated amidst all parties, that he was ridiculed by his friends, and execrated by his enemies. The exuberance of his fertile pen, and strangeness and manner of his subjects,

and his pertinacity in voluminous publication, are known, and are nearly unparalleled in literary history.

Could the man himself be separated from the author, PRYNNE would not appear ridiculous; but the unlucky author of nearly two hundred works*, and who,

* That all these works should not be wanting to posterity, PRYNNE deposited the complete collection in the library of Lincoln's Inn, about forty volumes in folio and quarto. Noy, the Attorney-General, Prynne's great adversary, was provoked at the Society's acceptance of these ponderous volumes, and promised to send them the voluminous labours of Taylor the water-poet, to place by their side; he judged, as Wood says, that "Prynne's books were worth little or nothing; that his proofs were no arguments, and his affirmations no testimonies." But honest Anthony, in spite of his prejudices against Prynne, confesses, that though "by the generality of scholars they are looked upon to be rather rhap-

as Wood quaintly computes, "must have written a sheet every day of his life, reckoning from the time that he came to the use of reason and the state of man," has involved his life in his authorship; the greatness of his character loses itself in his voluminous works; and whatever PRYNNE may have been, in his own age and to posterity, he was fated to endure all the calamities of an author who has turned learning into absurdity, and zealous industry into chimerical speculation.

sodical and confused, than polite or concise; yet, for Antiquaries, Critics, and sometimes for Divines, they are useful." Such erudition as Prynne's always retains its value — the author who could quote a hundred authors on "the unloveliness of love-locks," will always make a good literary chest of drawers, well filled, for those who can make better use of their contents than himself.

Yet his activity in public life, and the firmness and intrepidity of his characters were as ardent as in his study — his soul was Roman; and Eachard says, that Charles II. who could not but admire his earnest honesty, his copious learning, and the public persecutions so unmercifully inflicted on him, and the ten imprisonments he had endured from all parties, dignified him with the title of "the Cato of the Age;" and one of his own party facetiously described him as "William the Conqueror;" a title he had most hardly earned by his inflexible and invincible nature. Twice he had been cropped of his ears; for at the first time the executioner having spared the two fragments, the inhuman judge on his second trial having discovered them with astonishment, ordered them to be most unmercifully cut

close — then burnt on his cheek, ruinously fined, and imprisoned in a remote solitude*,— but had they torn him limb by

* Prynne seems to have considered being debarred from pen, ink, and books, as an act more barbarous than the loss of his ears. See his curious book of "A New Discovery of the Prelate's Tyranny;" it is a complete collection of every thing relating to Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton; three political fanatics, who seem impatiently to have courted the fate of Marsyas. Prynne, in his voluminous argument, proving the illegality of the sentences he had suffered, in his ninth point, thus gives way to all the feelings of Martinus Scriblerus. — "Point 9th, that the prohibiting of me pen, ink, paper, and books, is against law." He employs an argument to prove that the abuse of any lawful thing never takes away the use of it; therefore the law does not deprive gluttons or drunkards of necessary meat and drink; this analogy he applies to his pen, ink, and books, of which they could not deprive him, though they migh punish him for their abuse. He asserts

limb, PRYNNE had been in his mind a very polypus, which cut into pieces, still loses none of its individuality.

His conduct on the last of these occasions, when sentenced to be stigmatized, and to have his ears cut close, must be noticed. Turning to the executioner, he calmly invited him to do his duty—"Come,

that the popish prelates, in the reign of Mary, were the first who invented this new torture of depriving a scribbler of pen and ink. He quotes a long passage from Ovid's Tristia, to prove, that though exiled to the Isle of Pontus for his wanton books of love, pen and ink were not denied him to compose new poems; that St. John, banished to the Isle of Patmos by the persecuting Domitian, still was allowed pen and ink, for there he wrote the Revelations—and he proceeds with similar facts. PRYNNE's books abound with uncommon facts on common topics, for he had no discernment; and he seems to have written to convince himself, and not the public.

friend, come, burn me! cut me! I fear not! I have learned to fear the fire of hell, and not what man can do unto me; come, scar me! scar me!" In PRYNNE this was not ferocity, but heroism; Bastwick was intrepid out of spite, and Burton from fanaticism. The executioner had been urged not to spare his victims; and he performed his office with extraordinary severity, cruelly heating his iron twice, and cutting one of Prynne's ears so close, as to take away a piece of the cheek. Prynne stirred not in the torture; and when it was done, smiled, observing, "The more I am beaten down, the more I am lift up." After this punishment, in going to the Tower by water, he composed the following verses on the two letters branded on his cheek, S. L. for Schismatical Libeller, but which PRYNNE chose to translate

"Stigmata Laudis," the stigmas of his enemy, the Archbishop Laud.

"Stigmata maxillis referens insignia LAUDIS,
Exultans remeo, victima grata Deo."

The heroic man who could endure agony and insult, and even thus commemorate his sufferings, with no unpoetical conception, almost degrades his own sublimity when the Poetaster sets our teeth on edge by his verse.

"Bearing Laud's stamps on my cheeks I retire
Triumphing, God's sweet sacrifice by fire."

The triumph of this unconquered being was, indeed, signal. History scarcely exhibits so wonderful a reverse of fortune, and so strict a retribution, as occurred at this eventful period. He, who had borne from the Archbishop, and the Lords in the Star Chamber, the most virulent in-

vectives, wishing them at that instant seriously to consider, that some who sat there on the bench might yet stand prisoners at the bar, and need the favour they now denied — at length saw the prediction completely verified. What were the feelings of Laud, when PRYNNE, returning from his prison of Mount Orgueil, in triumph, the road strewed with boughs, amidst the acclamations of the people — entering the apartment in the Tower which the venerable Laud now in his turn occupied, while the unsparing Puritan sternly performed his office of rifling his papers*,

* The interesting particulars of this interview have been preserved by the Archbishop himself — and it is curious to observe how Laud could now utter the same tones of murmur and grief to which PRYNNE himself had recently given way. Studied insult in these cases accompanies power in the hands of a faction. I shall collect these particulars from "The

and persecuted the unfortunate Prelate till he led him to the block. PRYNNE, to use

History of the Troubles and Tryal of Archbishop Laud," and refer to Vicars's "God in the Mount, or a Parliamentarie Chronicle," p. 344, for the Puritanic triumphs.

"My implacable enemy, Mr. Pryn, was picked out as a man whose malice might be trusted to make the search upon me, and he did it exactly. The manner of the search upon me was thus: Mr. Pryn came into the Tower so soon as the gates were open — commanded the Warder to open my door — he came into my chamber, and found me in bed — Mr. Pryn, seeing me safe in bed, falls first to my pockets to rifle them — it was expressed in the warrant that he should search my pockets. Did they remember, when they gave this warrant, how odious it was to Parliaments, and some of themselves, to have the pockets of men searched? I rose, got my gown upon my shoulders, and he held me in the search till past nine in the morning (he had come in betimes in the morning in the month of May). He took from me twenty-one bundles of papers, which I had pre-

his own words, for he could be eloquent when moved by passion, " had struck

pared for my defence, &c. a little book or diary, containing all the occurrences of my life, and my book of private devotions; both written with my own hand. Nor could I get him to leave this last; he must needs see what passed between God and me. The last place he rifled was a trunk which stood by my bed-side; in that he found nothing but about forty pounds in money, for my necessary expences, which he meddled not with, and a bundle of some gloves. This bundle he was so careful to open, as that he caused each glove to be looked into; upon this I tendered him one pair of the gloves, which he refusing, I told him he might take them, and fear no bribe, for he had already done me all the mischief he could, and I asked no favour of him; so he thanked me, took the gloves and bound up my papers, and went his way."—PRYNNE had a good deal of *cunning* in his character, as well as fortitude. He had all the subterfuges and quirks which, perhaps, form too strong a feature in the character of

proud Canterbury to the heart; and had undermined all his prelatical designs to

"an utter Barrister of Lincoln's Inn." One of his tricks was secretly printing extracts from the diary of Laud, and placing a copy in the hands of every Member of the House, which was a sudden stroke on the Archbishop, when at the bar, that at the moment overcame him. Once when Prynne was printing one of his libels, he attempted to deny being the author, and ran to the printing-house to distribute the forms, but it was proved he had corrected the proof and the revise. Another time, when he had written a libellous letter to the Archbishop, Noy, the Attorney-General, sent for Prynne from his prison, and demanded of him whether the letter was of his own hand-writing? Prynne said he must see and read the letter before he could determine; and when Noy gave it to him, Prynne tore it to pieces, and threw the fragments out of the window, that it might not be brought in evidence against him. Noy had preserved a copy, but that did not avail him, as Prynne well knew that the misdemeanor was in the letter

advance the Bishop's pomp and power*;" PRYNNE triumphed — but, even this austere Puritan soon grieved over the calamities he had contributed to inflict on the nation; and, with a humane feeling, he once wished, that "when they had cut off his ears, they had cut off his head." He closed his political existence by becoming an advocate for the Restoration; but, with his accustomed want of judgment, and intemperate zeal, had nearly injured the cause by his premature activity. At the Restoration some difficulty occurred to dispose of "Busie Mr. Prin," as Whitelocke calls him. It is said he wished to be one of the Barons of the Exchequer,

itself; and Noy gave up the prosecution, as there was now no remedy.

* Breviate of the Bishop's intolerable usurpations, p. 35.

but he was made the Keeper of the Records in the Tower, "purposely to employ his head from scribbling against the State and Bishops;" where they put him to clear the Augean stable of our national antiquities, and see whether they could weary out his restless vigour. PRYNNE had, indeed, written till he found no antagonist would reply; and now he rioted in leafy folios, and proved himself to be one of the greatest paper-worms which ever crept into old books and mouldy records.

The literary character of PRYNNE is described by the happy epithet which Anthony Wood applies to him, "Voluminous Prynne*;" and it may be illus-

* PRYNNE's great characteristic is opposed to that axiom of Hesiod so often quoted, that "half is better than the whole;" a secret which the matter-of-fact-men rarely discover. Wanting judgment,

trated by his singular book, "Histriomastix,"—where we shall have occasion to observe how an Author's exuberant learning, like corn heaped in a granary, grows

and the tact of good sense, these detailers have no power of selection from their stores, to make one prominent fact represent the hundred minuter ones that may follow it. Voluminously feeble, they imagine expansion is stronger than compression; and know not to generalize, while they only can deal in particulars. Prynne's speeches were just as voluminous as his writings; always deficient in judgment, and abounding in knowledge—he was always wearying others, but never could himself. He once made a speech to the House, to persuade them the King's concessions were sufficient ground for a treaty; it contains a complete narrative of all the transactions between the King, the Houses, and the Army, from the beginning of the Parliament; it takes up 140 octavo pages, and kept the House so long together, that the debates lasted from Monday morning, till Tuesday morning!

rank and musty, by a want of power to ventilate and stir about the heavy mass.

This paper-worm may first be viewed in his study, as painted by the picturesque Anthony Wood; an artist in the Flemish school:

"His custom, when he studied, was to put on a long quilted cap, which came an inch over his eyes, serving as an umbrella to defend them from too much light, and *seldom eating any dinner*, would be every three hours maunching a roll of bread, and now and then refresh his exhausted spirits with ale brought to him by his servant," a custom to which Butler alludes,

"Thou that with ale, or viler liquors,
Didst inspire Withers, PRYNNE, and Vicars,
And teach, tho' it were in despight
Of Nature and their stars to write."

The "HISTRIOMASTIX, the Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedie," is a ponderous quarto, ascending to about 1100 pages; a Puritan's invective against Plays and Players, accusing them of every kind of crime, including libels against Church and State*; but it is more remarkable for the incalculable quotations and references foaming over the margins. PRYNNE scarcely ventures on the most trivial opinion, without calling to his aid whatever had been said in all nations and in all ages; and Cicero and Master Stubbs, Petrarch and Minutius Felix, Isaiah and Froissart's Chronicle, oddly associate in the ravings of erudition. Who, indeed,

* Hume, in his history, has given some account of this enormous quarto; to which I refer the reader, vol. VI. chap. LII.

but the Author who "seldom dined," could have quoted perhaps a thousand writers, in one volume*? A wit of the times remarked of this *Helluo librorum*, that "Nature makes ever the dullest beasts most laborious, and the greatest feeders;" and PRYNNE has been reproached with a weak digestion, for "returning things unaltered, which is a symptom of a feeble stomach."

When we examine this volume, often alluded to, the birth of the monster seems prodigious and mysterious; for it combines

* Milton admirably characterises Prynne's absurd learning, as well as his character, in his treatise on "The likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church," as "a late hot querist for tythes, whom ye may know by *his wits lying ever beside him in the margin, to be ever beside his wits in the text.* A fierce Reformer once; now rankled with a contrary heat."

too contrary qualities; it is so elaborate in its researches among the thousand authors quoted, that these required years to accumulate, and yet the matter is often temporary, and levelled at fugitive events and particular persons. Such learning looks like inspiration, and the very formation of this mighty volume seems paradoxical; but the secret history of this book is as extraordinary as the book itself — and forms a remarkable proof how the want of sense, in a work of immense erudition, involved the author, and whoever was concerned in his book, in total ruin. The author was pilloried, fined, and imprisoned; his publisher condemned in the penalty of five hundred pounds, and barred for ever from printing and selling books, and the licenser removed and punished. Such was the fatality attending the book of a man,

whose literary voracity produced one of the most tremendous indigestions, in a malady of writing.

It was on examining Prynne's trial I discovered the secret history of the "Histriomastix." Prynne was seven years in writing this work, and, what is almost incredible, it was near four years passing through the press. During that interval the eternal scribbler was daily gorging himself with voluminous food, and daily fattening his cooped-up capon. — The temporary sedition and libels were the gradual Mosaic inlayings through this shapeless mass.

It appears that the volume of 1100 quarto pages originally consisted of little more than a quire of paper; but PRYNNE found insuperable difficulties in procuring

a licenser, even for this infant Hercules. Dr. Goode deposed that

"About eight years ago Mr. Prynne brought to him a quire of paper to license, which he refused; and he recollected the circumstance by having held an argument with Prynne on his severe reprehension of the unlawfulness of a man to put on Women's apparel, which, the good-humoured Doctor asserted, was not always unlawful; for suppose Mr. Prynne yourself, as a Christian, was persecuted by Pagans, think you not if you disguised yourself in your maid's apparel, you did well? Prynne sternly answered that he thought himself bound rather to yield to death than to do so."

Another licenser, Dr. Harris, deposed, that about seven years ago,

Mr. Prynne came to him to license a treatise concerning stage-plays; but he would not

allow of the same — and adds, "So this man did deliver this book when it was young and tender, and would have had it then printed; but it is since grown seven times bigger, and seven times worse."

PRYNNE not being able to procure these licensers, had recourse to another, Buckner, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was usual for the licenser to examine the MS. before it went to the press; but Prynne either tampered with Buckner, or so confused his intellects by keeping his multifarious volume in the press for four years — and sometimes, I suspect, by numbering folios for pages, as appears in the work, that the examination of the licenser gradually relaxed; and he declares in his defence that he had only licensed part of it. The bookseller, Sparks, was, indeed, a noted publisher of what was

then called " Unlawful and unlicensed books;" and he had declared that it was " an excellent book, which would be called in, and then sell well." He confesses the book had been more than three years in the press, and had cost him three hundred pounds.

The speech of Noy, the Attorney-General, conveys some notion of the work itself; sufficiently curious as giving the feelings of those times against the Puritans.

" Who he means by his *modern innovators* in the Church, and by *cringing and ducking* to altars, a fit term to bestow on the Church; he learned it of the *Canters*, being used among them. The musick in the Church, the charitable term he giveth it, is not to be a noise of men, but rather a *bleating of brute beasts;* choristers *bellow* the tenor, as it were oxen;

bark a counterpoint as a kennel of dogs; *roar* out a treble, like a sort of bulls; *grunt* out a bass, as it were a number of hogs. — Bishops he calls, the *silk and satin divines;* says Christ was a Puritan, in his Index. He falleth on those things that have not relation to stage-plays, musick in the Church, dancing, New-years gifts, &c. — then upon altars, images, hair of men and women, Bishops and bonfires. Cards and tables do offend him, and perukes do fall within the compass of his theme. His end is to persuade the people that we are returning back again to Paganism, and to persuade them to go and serve God in another country, as many are gone already, and set up new laws and fancies among themselves. Consider what may come of it!"

The decision of the Lords of the Star-chamber was dictated by passion as much as justice — Its severity exceeded the crime

of having produced an unreadable volume of indigested erudition; and the scribbler was too hardly used, scarcely to escape with life. Lord Cottington, amazed at the mighty volume, too bluntly affirmed that Prynne did not write this book alone; "he either assisted the devil, or was assisted by the devil." But secretary Cooke delivered a sensible and temperate speech; remarking on all its false erudition, that,

"By this vast book of Mr. Prynne's, it appeareth that he hath read more than he hath studied, and studied more than he hath considered. He calleth his book 'Histriomastix;' but therein he sheweth himself like unto Ajax Anthropomastix, as the Grecians called him, the scourge of all mankind, that is, the whipper and the whip."

Such is the history of a man, whose greatness of character was clouded over and

lost in a fatal passion for scribbling; such is the history of a voluminous author, whose genius was such that he could write a folio much easier than a page; and "seldom dined" that he might quote "Squadrons of Authorities *."

* The very expression PRYNNE himself uses, see p. 668 of the Histriomastix; where having gone through "three squadrons," he commences a fresh chapter thus: "The fourth squadron of authorities is the venerable troope of 70 several renowned ancient fathers;" and he throws in more than he promised, all which are quoted volume and page, as so many "play-confounding arguments." He has, perhaps, quoted from three to four hundred authors on a single point.

GENIUS AND ERUDITION,

THE VICTIMS OF IMMODERATE VANITY.

The name of Toland is more familiar than his character, yet his literary portrait has great singularity; he must be classed among the "Authors by Profession," an honour secured by near fifty publications; and we shall discover that he aimed to combine with the literary character, one peculiarly his own. With higher talents and more learning than have been conceded to him, there ran in his mind an original vein of thinking. Yet his whole life exhibits in how small a degree great intellectual powers, when scattered through all the forms which Vanity suggests, will contribute to an Author's social comforts,

or raise him in public esteem. TOLAND was fruitful in his productions, and still more in his projects; yet it is mortifying to estimate the result of all the intense activity of the life of an author of genius, which terminates in being placed among these CALAMITIES.

TOLAND'S birth was probably illegitimate; a circumstance which influenced the formation of his character. Baptised in ridicule, he had nearly fallen a victim to Mr. Shandy's system of Christian names, for he bore the strange ones of *Janus Junius*, which, when the school-roll was called over every morning, afforded perpetual merriment, till the Master blest him with plain *John*, which the boy adopted, and lived in quiet. I must say something on the names themselves, perhaps as ridiculous! May they not have influenced the character of TOLAND,

since they certainly describe it*? He had all the shiftings of the double-faced *Janus*, and the revolutionary politics of the ancient *Junius*. His Godfathers sent him into the world in cruel mockery, to remind their Irish boy of the fortunes that await the desperately bold: nor did TOLAND forget the strong-marked designations; for to his most objectionable work, the Latin tract entitled *Pantheisticon*, descriptive of what some have considered as an Atheistical society, he subscribes these appropriate names, which at the time were imagined to be fictitious.

TOLAND ran away from school and popery. When in after-life he was reproached with native obscurity, he osten-

* For some notices of "the influence of names," I must refer to "Curiosities of Literature," edition 1807, not being in the preceding ones.

tatiously produced a testimonial of his birth and family, hatched up at a convent of Irish Franciscans in Germany, where the good Fathers subscribed, with their ink tinged with their rhenish, to his most ancient descent, referring to the Irish history! which they considered as a parish register, fit for the suspected son of an Irish Priest!

TOLAND, from early life, was therefore dependent on patrons; but illegitimate birth creates strong and determined characters, and TOLAND had all the self-independence, the force, and the originality of one. He was a seed thrown by chance, that is to grow of itself wherever it falls.

This child of fortune studied at four Universities; at Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leyden; from the latter he passed to Oxford, and, in the Bodleian Library, collected the materials for his after-studies.

He loved study, and even at a later period declares, that "No employment or condition of life shall make me disrelish the lasting entertainment of books." In his "Description of Epsom," he observes that the taste for retirement, reading, and contemplation, promotes the true relish for select company, and says,

"Thus I remove at pleasure, as I grow weary of the country or the town, as I avoid a crowd or seek company.—Here then let me have *books and bread* enough without dependance; a bottle of hermitage and a plate of olives for a select friend; with an early rose to present a young lady as an emblem of discretion no less than of beauty."

The mind of Toland was originally finely constructed.

At Oxford appeared that predilection for paradoxes and over-curious speculations,

which formed afterwards the marking feature of his literary character. He has been unjustly contemned as a sciolist; he was the correspondent of Leibnitz, Le Clerc, and Bayle, and was a learned Author when scarcely a man. He first published a Dissertation on the strange tragical death of Regulus, and proved it an idle fiction. A greater paradox might have been his projected speculation on Job, to demonstrate that only the dialogue was genuine; the rest being the work of some idle Rabbin, who had invented a monstrous story to account for the extraordinary afflictions of that model of a divine mind. Speculations of so much learning and ingenuity are uncommon in a young man; but TOLAND was so unfortunate as to value his own merits, before those who did not care to hear of them.

Hardy VANITY was to recompense him, perhaps he thought, for that want of fortune and connections, which raised duller spirits above him. Vain, loquacious, inconsiderate, and daring, he assumed the dictatorship of a coffee-house, and obtained easy conquests, which he mistook for glorious ones, over the graver fellows, who had for many a year awfully petrified their own colleges. He gave more violent offence by his new opinions on Religion. An anonymous person addressed two letters to this new Heresiarch, solemn and monitory *. TOLAND'S answer is as honourable as that of his monitor's. This passage is forcibly conceived:

* These letters will interest every religious person; they may be found in Toland's posthumous works, vol. II. p. 295.

"To what purpose should I study here or elsewhere, were I an *Atheist* or *Deist*, for one of the two you take me to be? What a contradiction to mention virtue, if I believed there was no God, or one so impotent that could not, or so malicious, that would not reveal himself! Nay, tho' I granted a Deity yet, if nothing of me subsisted after death, what laws could bind, what incentives could move me to common honesty? Annihilation would be a sanctuary for all my sins, and put an end to my crimes with myself. Believe me I am not so indifferent to the evils of the present life, but, without the expectation of a better, I should soon suspend the mechanism of my body, and resolve into inconscious atoms."

This early moment of his life proved to be its crisis, and the first step he took decided his after-progress. His first great

work of "Christianity not Mysterious," produced immense consequences. TOLAND persevered in denying that it was designed as any attack on Christianity, but only on those substractions, additions, and other alterations, which have corrupted that pure institution. The work, at least, like its title, is "Mysterious*." TOLAND passed over to Ireland, but his book having got there before him, the author beheld himself anathematised; the pulpits thundered, and it was dangerous

* TOLAND pretends to prove that "there is nothing in the Christian Religion, not only which is contrary to reason, but even which is above it."—He made use of some arguments (says Le Clerc) that were drawn from LOCKE's Treatise on Human Understanding. Locke was a Christian, whom all Christians ought to reverence; and had his strength not entirely deserted him before he died, he would

to be seen conversing with him. A Jury who confessed they could not comprehend a page of his book, condemned it to be burnt. TOLAND now felt a tenderness for his person; and the humane Molyneux, the friend of Locke, while he censures the imprudent vanity of our author, gladly witnessed the flight of "the poor gentleman." But SOUTH, indignant at our English moderation respecting his own controversy with SHERLOCK on some doctrinal points of the Trinity, congratulates the Archbishop of Dublin on the Irish

have composed a work which might have impressed on our minds a noble idea of Christianity. I have seen in MS. a finished treatise by Locke, on Religion, addressed to Lady Shaftesbury; Locke gives it as a translation from the French. I regret my account is so imperfect; but the possessor may, perhaps, be induced to give it to the public.

persecution; and equally witty and intolerant, he writes on TOLAND, "Your Parliament presently sent him packing, and, without the help of a *faggot*, soon made the kingdom *too hot* for him."

TOLAND was accused of an intention to found a sect, as SOUTH calls them, of "Mahometan-Christians." Many were stigmatised as *Tolandists;* but the disciples of a man who never procured for their Prophet a bit of dinner or a new wig, for he was frequently wanting both, were not to be feared as enthusiasts. The persecution from the church only rankled in the breast of TOLAND, and excited unextinguishable revenge.

He now breathed awhile from the bonfire of Theology; and our *Janus* turned his political face. He edited Milton's voluminous politics, and Harring-

ton's fantastical Oceana, and, as his "Christianity not Mysterious" had stamped his Religion with something worse than Heresy, so in Politics he was branded as a Commonwealth's man. TOLAND had evidently strong nerves; for him, opposition produced controversy, which he loved, and controversy produced books, by which he lived.

But let it not be imagined that TOLAND affected to be considered as no Christian, or avowed himself as a Republican. "Civil and religious Toleration" (he says) "have been the two main objects of all my writings." He declares himself to be only a primitive Christian, and a pure Whig. But an Author must not be permitted to understand himself so much clearer than his readers. His mysterious conduct may be detected in his want of moral integrity.

He had the art of explaining away his own words, as in his first controversy about the word *Mystery* in Religion, and he exults in his artifice; for, in a letter where he is soliciting the Minister for employment, he says, "The Church is much exasperated against me; yet as that is the heaviest article, so it is undoubtedly the easiest conquered, and I know *the infallible method of doing it*." And, in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he promises to *reform his religion to that Prelate's liking!* He took the Sacrament as an opening for the negotiation *! But

* What can be more explicit than his recantation at the close of his *Vindicius Liberius*. After telling us that he had withdrawn from sale, after the second edition, his "Christianity not Mysterious, when I perceived what real or pretended offence it had given,"—he concludes thus:—"Being now arrived to

we are concerned chiefly with his literary character, whose quick growth and fertility resemble him to a planter of poplars. He was so confirmed an Author, that he never published one book without promising another; refers to others in MS, and some of his most curious works are posthumous.

years that will not wholly excuse inconsiderateness in resolving, or precipitance in acting, I firmly hope that my *persuasion* and *practice* will show me *to be a true Christian,* that my due *conformity* to the *public worship* may prove me to be *a good Churchman,* and that my untainted loyalty to King William will argue me to be a staunch Commonwealthsman; that I shall continue all my life a friend to Religion, an enemy to superstition, a supporter of good Kings, and a deposer of tyrants!"

Observe, this *Vindicius Liberius* was published on his return from one of his political tours in Germany; his views were then of a very different nature from those of controversial divinity, but it was

He was a great artificer of title-pages; covering them with a promising luxuriance, and in this way recommended his works to the booksellers. He had an odd taste for running inscriptions of whimsical crabbed terms; the gold-dust of erudition to gild over a title; such as "Tetra-

absolutely necessary to allay the storm the Church had raised against him. We begin now to understand a little better the character of TOLAND—these literary adventurers, with heroic pretensions, can practise the meanest artifices, and shrink themselves into nothing to creep out of a hole. How does this recantation agree with the "Nazarenus," and the other theological works which TOLAND was publishing all his life? Posterity only can judge of men's characters—it takes in at a glance the whole of a life; but contemporaries only view a part, often apparently unconnected and at variance, when in fact it is neither. This recantation is full of the spirit of *Janus Junius* TOLAND!

dymus—Hodegus--Clidopharus"—"Adeisidaemon, or the Unsuperstitious." He pretends these affected titles indicated their several subjects, which they evidently did not, for each hard term he fully explains in a page of plain English. The genius of TOLAND could descend to literary quackery.

He had the art of propagating books; his small life of Milton produced several; besides the complacency he felt in extracting long passages from Milton against the Bishops. In this life his attack of the authenticity of the *Eikon Basilike* of Charles I. branched into another on supposititious writings, and this included the spurious gospels! Association of ideas is a nursing mother to the fertility of authorship. The spurious gospels opened a fresh theological campaign; and produced

his " Amyntor ;" there was no end in provoking an Author, who, in writing the life of a Poet, could contrive to put the authenticity of the Testament to the proof!

Amidst his philosophical labours, his VANITY induced him to seize on all temporary topics to which his facility and ingenuity gave currency; the choice of his subjects forms an amusing catalogue, for he had " Remarks" and " Projects" as fast as events were passing. He wrote on " The Art of Governing by Parties," on " Anglia Libera," " Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews," on " The Art of Canvassing at Elections," " On raising a National Bank without Capital," " The State Anatomy," " Dunkirk or Dover," &c. &c. These, and many like these, set off with catching titles, proved to the author, that

a man of genius may be capable of writing on all topics at all times, and make the country his debtor, without benefiting his own creditors*.

There was a moment in Toland's life when he felt, or thought he felt, fortune in his grasp. He was then floating on

* In examining the original papers of Toland, which are preserved, I found some of his agreements with booksellers. For his description of Epsom he was to receive only four guineas in case 1000 were sold. He received ten guineas for his pamphlet on Naturalizing the Jews, and ten guineas more in case Bernard Lintott sold 2000. The words of this agreement run thus: "Whenever Mr. Toland calls for ten guineas, after the first of February next, I promise to pay them, if I *cannot shew* that 200 of the copies remain unsold." What a sublime person is an Author! What a misery is Authorship! The great Philosopher who creates systems that are to alter the face of his country, must stand at the counter to count out 200 unsold copies!

the ideal waves of the South-sea bubble; the poor author, elated with a notion that he was rich enough to print at his own cost, dispersed copies of his absurd "Pantheisticon." He describes a society of Pantheists, who worship the universe as God; a mystery much greater than those he attacked in Christianity. Their prayers are passages from Cicero and Seneca, and they chaunt long poems instead of psalms; so that in their zeal they endured a little tediousness. The next objectionable circumstance, in this wild ebullition of philosophical wantonness, is the apparent burlesque of some liturgies; and a wag having inserted, in some copies, an impious prayer to Bacchus, Toland suffered for the folly of others, as well as his own*.

* Des Maiseaux frees TOLAND from this calumny, and hints at his own personal knowledge of the au-

With all this bustle of authorship, amidst temporary publications which required such prompt ingenuity, and elaborate works which matured the fruits of early studies, TOLAND was still not a sedentary writer. I found him often travelling on the Continent, and wondered how a guinealess author could so easily transport himself from Flanders to Germany, and appear at home in the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, and Hanover. I discovered a concealed feature in the character of our ambiguous philosopher.

thor — but he does not know what a foreign writer authenticates, that this blasphemous address to Bacchus is a parody of a prayer in the Romish ritual, wrote two centuries before by a very proper society of *Pantheists,* a club of drunkards! With the South-sea bubble, vanished Toland's desire of printing books at his own risk, and thus relieved the world from the weight of more *Pantheisticons!*

In the only life we have of TOLAND, by Des Maiseaux, prefixed to his posthumous works, he tells us, that TOLAND was at the Court of Berlin, but "an incident *too ludicrous to be mentioned*, obliged him to leave that place sooner than he expected." Here is an incident in a narrative clearly marked out, but never to be supplied! This incident had however an important result, since it sent TOLAND away in haste; and we wish to know *why* he was there? But this chronological biographer *, "good easy man," suspects nothing more ex-

* WARBURTON has well described Des Maiseaux: "All the Life-writers we have had are, indeed, strange insipid creatures. The verbose tasteless Frenchman seems to lay it down as a principle that every life must be a book, and what is worse, it proves a book without a life; for what do we know of Boileau after all his tedious stuff?"

traordinary when he tells us TOLAND was at Berlin or Hanover, than when he finds him at Epsom; imagines TOLAND only went to the electoral Princess Sophia, and the Queen of Prussia, who were "Ladies of sublime genius," to entertain them by vexing some grave German divines, with philosophical conferences, and paradoxical conundrums; all the ravings of TOLAND'S idleness *.

* One of these philosophical conferences, has been preserved by Beausobre, who was indeed the party concerned. He inserted it in the "Bibliotheque Germanique," a curious literary journal, in 50 volumes, written by L'Enfant, Beausobre, and Formey. It is very copious, and very curious, and is preserved in the General Dictionary, art. Toland. The parties, after a warm contest, were very wisely interrupted by the Queen, when she discovered they had exhausted their learning, and were beginning to rail at each other.

This secret history of TOLAND can only be picked out by fine threads. He professed to be a literary character — he had opened a periodical "literary correspondence," as he terms it, with Prince Eugene; he was a favourite with the Electoral Princess Sophia, and the Queen of Prussia, to whom he addressed his "Letters to Serena." Was he a political agent? Yet how was it that TOLAND was often driven home by distressed circumstances? He seems not to have been a practical politician, for he managed his own affairs very ill; or was the political intriguer rather a suspected, than a confidential servant of all his masters and mistresses? for it is evident no one cared for him! The absence of moral integrity was probably never disguised by the loquacious VANITY of this literary adventurer.

In his posthumous works, are several "Memorials" for the Earl of Oxford, which throw a new light over an union of political *Espionage* with the literary character, and finally concluding in producing that extraordinary one, which the political imagination of TOLAND has created in all the obscurity and heat of his reveries.

In one of these "Memorials," forcibly written and full of curiosity, TOLAND remonstrates with the minister for his marked neglect of him; opens the scheme of a political tour, where, like *Guthrie*, he would be content with his *quarterage*. He defines his character: for the independent Whig affects to spurn at the office, though he might not shrink at the duties of a spy.

"Whether such a person, Sir," he says, "who is *neither Minister nor Spy*, and as a *lover*

of learning will be welcome every where, may not prove of extraordinary use to my Lord Treasurer, as well as to his predecessor *Burleigh,* who employed such, I leave his Lordship and you to consider."

Still *this character,* whatever title may designate it, is inferior in dignity and importance to that one which is now to be discovered. It pourtrays TOLAND where his life-writer has not given a touch from his brush; it is a political curiosity.

"I laid an honester scheme of serving my country, your Lordship, and myself; for, seeing it was neither convenient for you, nor a thing at all desired by me, that I should appear in any public post, I sincerely proposed, as occasions should offer, to communicate to your Lordship my observations on *the temper of the Ministry, the dispositions of the people, the condition of our enemies, or*

allies abroad, and what I might think *most expedient in every conjuncture;* which advice you were to follow in whole, or in part, or not at all, as your own superior wisdom should direct. My general acquaintance, the several languages I speak, the experience I have acquired in foreign affairs, and being engaged in no interest at home, besides that of the public, should qualify me in some measure for this province. ALL WISE MINISTERS HAVE EVER HAD SUCH PRIVATE MONITORS. As much as I thought myself fit, or was thought so by others, for such general observations, so much have I ever abhorred, my Lord, *those particular observers we call* SPIES; but I despise the calumny no less than I detest the thing. — Of such general observations, you should have perused a far greater number than I thought fit to present hitherto, had I discovered, by due effects, that they were acceptable from *me;* for they must un-

avoidably be received from *some body*, unless a Minister were omniscient—yet I soon had good reason to believe I was not designed for the man; whatever the original sin could be that made me incapable of such a trust, and which I now begin to suspect. Without direct answers to my proposals, how could I know whether I helped my friends elsewhere, or betrayed them contrary to my intentions! and accordingly I have for some time been very cautious and reserved. But if your Lordship will enter into any measures with me, to procure *the good of my country*, I shall be more ready to *serve* your Lordship in this, or in some becoming capacity, than any other Minister. They who confided to my management affairs of a higher nature, have found me exact as well as secret. My impenetrable negotiation at Vienna (hid under the pretence of curiosity) was not only applauded by the Prince that employed me, but also propor-

tionably rewarded. And here, my Lord, give me leave to say that I have found England miserably served abroad since this change; and our Ministers at home are sometimes as great strangers to the genius as to the persons of those with whom they have to do.—At —— you have placed the most unacceptable man in the world, one that lived in a scandalous misunderstanding with the Minister of the States at another Court, one that has been the laughing-stock of all Courts, for his senseless haughtiness, and most ridiculous airs, and one that can never judge aright, unless by accident, in any thing."

The discarded, or the suspected *private Monitor of the Minister*, warms into the tenderest language of political amour, and mourns their rupture but as the quarrels of Lovers.

"I cannot, from all these considerations, but in the nature of a Lover, complain of your present neglect, and be solicitous for your future care." —And again, "I have made use of the simile of a Lover, and as such, indeed, I thought fit, once for all, to come to a thorough explanation, resolved, if my affection be not killed by your unkindness, to become indissolubly your's."

Such is the nice artifice of colouring with a pretended love of the country, the sordidness of a political intriguer, and giving clean names to filthy things. But this view of the political face of our *Janus* is not complete till we discover the levity he could carry into politics when not disguised by more pompous pretensions. I shall give two extracts from letters composed in a different spirit.

"I am bound for Germany, though first for Flanders, and next for Holland. I believe I shall be pretty well accommodated for this voyage, which I expect will be very short. Lord! how near was *my old woman* being a Queen! and your humble servant being *at his ease.*"

His *old woman* was the Electoral Princess Sophia; and *his ease* is what patriots distinguish as *the love of their country!* Again—

"The October Club, if rightly managed, will be rare stuff *to work the ends of any party.* I sent such an account of these wights to an *old gentlewoman* of my acquaintance, as, in the midst of fears (the change of Ministry) will make her laugh."

After all his voluminous literature, and his refined politics, TOLAND lived and died the life of an Author by Profession,

in an obscure lodging at a country carpenter's, in great distress. He had still one patron left, who was himself poor, Lord Molesworth; who promised him, if he lived,

"Bare necessaries; these are but cold comfort to a man of your spirit and desert; but 'tis all I dare promise! 'Tis an ungrateful age, and we must bear with it the best we may till we can mend it."

And his Lordship tells of his unsuccessful application to some Whig Lord for Toland; and concludes,

"'Tis a sad monster of a man, and not worthy of further notice."

I have observed that TOLAND had strong nerves; he neither feared controversies, nor that which closes all. Having examined his papers which have been pre-

served, I can sketch a minute picture of the last days of our "Author by Profession." At the carpenter's lodgings, he drew up a list of all his books — they were piled on four chairs, to the amount of 155 — most of them works which evince learned studies. Some of his MSS. are transcribed in Greek*. To this list he

* As TOLAND's erudition has been lightly esteemed, I subjoin, for the gratification of the curious, a few of these authors. Spanhemii Opera; Clerici Pentateuchus; Constantini Lexicon Græco-Latinum; Fabricii Codex Apocryphus Vet. et Nov. Test.; Synesius de Regno; Historia imaginum cœlestium Gosselini, 16 volumes; Caryophili Dissertationes; Vonde Hardt Ephemerides Philologicæ; Trismegisti Opera; Recoldus, et alia Mahomedica; all the Works of Buxtorf; Salviani Opera; Reland de Relig. Mahomedica; Galli Opuscula Mythologica; Apollodori Bibliotheca; Palingenius; Apuleius; and

adds, " I need not recite those in the closet with the unbound books and pamphlets;

every Classical Author of Antiquity. As he was then employed in his curious history of the Druids, of which only a specimen is preserved, we may trace his researches in the following books: Luydii Archæologia Britannica; Old Irish Testament, &c.; Maccurtin's history of Ireland; O'Flaherty's Ogygia; Epistolarum Hibernicarum; Usher's Religion of the ancient Irish; Brand's Isles of Orkney and Zetland; Pezron's Antiquités des Celtes.

There are some singular papers among these fragments. One title of a work is " Priesthood without Priestcraft; or Superstition distinguished from Religion, Dominion from Order, and Bigotry from Reason, in the most principal Controversies about Church-government, which at present divide and deform Christianity." He has composed " A Psalm before Sermon in praise of Asinity." There are other singular titles and works in the mass of his papers.

nor my trunk wherein are all my papers and MSS." I perceive he circulated his MSS. among his friends, for there is a list by him as he lent them, among which are ladies as well as gentlemen, *esprits forts!*

Never has author died more in character than TOLAND; he may be said to have died with a busy pen in his hand. Having suffered from an unskilful physician, he avenged himself in his own way; for there was found on his table his "Essay on Physic without Physicians." The dying patriot-trader was also writing a preface for a political pamphlet on *the danger of mercenary Parliaments* — and the philosopher was composing his own epitaph; one more proof of the ruling passion predominating in Death; but why should a *Pantheist* be solicitous to perpetuate his genius and

his fame! I shall transcribe a few lines; surely they are no evidence of Atheism!

" Omnium Literarum excultor,
ac linguarum plus decem sciens;
Veritatis propugnator,
Libertatis assertor;
nullus autem sectator aut cliens,
nec minis, nec malis est inflexus,
quin quam elegit, viam perageret;
utili honestum anteferens.
Spiritus cum æthereo patre,
à quo prodiit olim, conjungitur;
corpus item, Naturæ cedens,
in materno gremio reponitur.
Ipse vero æternum est resurrecturus,
at idem futurus TOLANDUS nunquam *."

* A lover of all literature,
and knowing more than ten languages;
a champion for truth,
an assertor of liberty,

One would have imagined that the writer of his own panegyrical epitaph would have been careful to have transmitted to posterity a copy of his features; but I know of no portrait of TOLAND. His patrons seem never to have been generous, nor his disciples grateful; they mortified rather than indulged the egotism of his genius. There appeared, indeed, an elegy, shortly after the death of TOLAND, so ingeniously contrived, that it is not

but the follower, or dependant of no man;
nor could menaces nor fortune bend him;
the way he had chosen he pursued,
preferring honesty to his interest.
His spirit is joined with its ætherial father
from whom it originally proceeded;
his body likewise, yielding to Nature,
is again laid in the lap of its mother;
but he is about to rise again in eternity,
yet never to be the same TOLAND more.

clear whether he is eulogised or ridiculed. Amidst its solemnity these lines betray the sneer. "Has," exclaimed the eulogist of the ambiguous philosopher,

"Each jarring element gone angry home?
And *Master Toland* a *Non-ens* become?"

Locke, with all the prescient sagacity of that clear understanding that penetrated under the secret folds of the human heart, anticipated the life of Toland at its commencement. He admired the genius of the man; but, while he valued his parts and learning, he dreaded their result. In his letter I find these passages, which were then so prophetic, and are now so instructive:

"If his exceeding great value of himself do not deprive the world of that usefulness that his parts, if rightly conducted, might be of, I shall be very glad. — The hopes young

men give, of what use they will make of their parts, is, to me, the encouragement of being concerned for them; but, *if vanity increases with age, I always fear whither it will lead a man.*"

GENIUS, THE DUPE OF ITS PASSIONS.

POPE said that STEELE, though he led a careless and vicious life, yet he had nevertheless a love and reverence of virtue. The life of STEELE was not that of a retired scholar; hence his moral character becomes more instructive*. He was one of those whose hearts are the dupes of their imaginations, and who are hurried through life by the most despotic volition. He always preferred his caprices to his interests; or, according to his own notion, very ingenious, but not a little absurd,

* Parts of this character have appeared in a periodical publication.

" he was always of the humour of preferring the state of his mind to that of his fortune." The result of this principle of moral conduct was, that a man of the most admirable abilities was perpetually acting like a fool, and with a warm attachment to virtue, was the frailest of human beings.

In the first act of his life we find the seed that developed itself in the succeeding ones. His uncle could not endure a hero for his heir; but STEELE had seen a marching regiment; a sufficient reason with him to enlist as a private in the horse-guards: cocking his hat, and putting on a broad sword, jack boots, and shoulder belt, with the most generous feelings he forfeited a very good estate.—At length Ensign STEELE's frank temper and wit conciliated esteem, and extorted admi-

ration, and the Ensign became a favourite leader in all the dissipations of the town. All these were the ebullitions of genius, which had not yet received a legitimate direction. Amidst these orgies, however, it was often pensive, and forming itself; for it was in the height of these irregularities that STEELE composed his "Christian Hero," a moral and religious treatise, which the contritions of every morning dictated, and to which the disorders of every evening added another penitential page. Perhaps the genius of STEELE was never so ardent and so pure as at this period; and in his elegant letter to his commander, the celebrated Lord Cutts, he gives an interesting account of the origin of this production, which none but one deeply imbued with its feelings, could

have experienced. I transcribe the passage.

"*Tower Guard, March* 23, 1701.

"My Lord,

"The address of the following papers is so very much due to your Lordship, that they are but a mere report of what has passed upon my guard to my commander; for they were writ upon duty, when the mind was perfectly disengaged, and at leisure, in the silent watch of the night, to run over the busy dream of the day; and the vigilance which obliges us to suppose an enemy always near us, has awakened a sense that there is a restless and subtle one which constantly attends our steps, and meditates our ruin*."

To this solemn and monitory work, he prefixed his name, from this honourable

* Mr. Nichols's "Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard Steele, vol. I. p. 77.

motive, that it might serve as "a standing testimony against himself, and make him ashamed of understanding, and seeming to feel what was virtuous, and living so quite contrary a life." Do we not think that no one less than a saint is speaking to us? And yet he is still nothing more than Ensign Steele! He tells us that this grave work made him considered, who had been no undelightful companion, as a disagreeable fellow—and "The Christian Hero," by his own words, appears to have fought off several fool-hardy geniuses who were for "trying their valour on him," supposing a Saint was necessarily a Poltroon. Thus "The Christian Hero," finding himself slighted by his loose companions, sat down and composed a most laughable comedy, "The Funeral;" and with all the frankness of a man who cares not to hide

his motives, he tells us, that after his religious work he wrote the comedy because "nothing can make the town so fond of a man as a successful play*." The historian who had to record such strange events, following close on each other, of an Author publishing a book of piety, and a farce, could never have discovered the secret motive of the versatile Author; for what Author had ever such honest openness of disposition?

STEELE was now at once a man of the town and its censor, and wrote lively essays on the follies of the day in an enormous black peruke which cost him fifty guineas! He built an elegant villa, but, as he was always inculcating œconomy he

* Steele has given a delightful piece of self-biography, towards the end of his "Apology for himself and his writings," p. 80, 4to.

dates from "The Hovel." He detected the fallacy of the South-sea scheme, while he himself invented projects, neither inferior in magnificence nor in misery. He even turned alchemist, and wanted to coin gold, merely to distribute it. The most striking incident in the life of this man of volition, was his sudden marriage with a young lady who had attended on his first wife's funeral — struck by her angelical beauty, if we trust to his raptures. Yet this sage, who would have written so well on the choice of a wife, united himself to a character the most uncongenial to his own; cold, reserved, and most anxiously prudent in her attention to money, she was of a temper which every day grew worse by the perpetual imprudence and thoughtlessness of his own. He calls her "Prue" in fondness and reproach; she was Prudery itself!

His adoration was permanent, and so were his complaints; and they never parted but with bickerings — yet he could not suffer her absence, for he was writing to her three or four passionate notes in a day, which are dated from his office, or his bookseller's, or from some friend's house — he has rose in the midst of dinner to dispatch a line to "Prue," to assure her of his affection since noon *.—Her presence or her absence were equally painful to him.

* In the "Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard STEELE," edition of 1809 — are preserved these extraordinary love-dispatches; trivial as they are, this curious fact in domestic history could never have been ascertained without having seen them; they are of themselves incredible! "Prue" used poor STEELE at times very ill; indeed Steele seems to have conceived that his warm affections were all she required, for Lady Steele was usually left whole days in solitude, and frequently in want of a guinea,

Yet STEELE, gifted at all times with the susceptibility of genius, was exercising the finest feelings of the heart; the same generosity of temper which deluded

when Steele could not raise one. He, however, sometimes remonstrates with her very feelingly. The following note is an instance:

"DEAR WIFE,

"I have been in great pain of body and mind since I came out. You are extremely cruel to a generous nature, which has a tenderness for you that renders your least *dishumour* insupportably afflicting. After short starts of passion, not to be inclined to reconciliation, is what is against all rules of Christianity and justice. When I come home, I beg to be kindly received; or this will have as ill an effect upon my fortune, as on my mind and body."

In a postscript to another billet, he thus "sneers at Lady STEELE's excessive attention to money."

"Your man Sam owes me three-pence, which must be deducted in the account between you and me; therefore, pray take care to get it in, or stop it."

his judgment, and invigorated his passions, rendered him a tender and pathetic dramatist; a most fertile essayist; a patriot without private views; an enemy whose

Such dispatches as the following were sent off three or four times in a day.

"I beg of you not to be impatient though it be an hour before you see Your obliged husband,

"R. STEELE."

"DEAR PRUE,

"Don't be displeased that I do not come home till eleven o'clock. Yours, ever."

"DEAR PRUE,

"Forgive me dining abroad, and let Will carry the papers to Buckley's. Your fond devoted R. S."

"DEAR PRUE,

"I am very sleepy and tired, but could not think of closing my eyes till I had told you I am, dearest creature, your most affectionate faithful husband,

"R. STEELE.

"From the Press, One in the morning."

resentment died away in raillery, and a friend, who could warmly press the hand that chastised him. Whether in administration, or expelled the House — whether affluent, or flying from his creditors—in the fulness of his heart he perhaps secured his own happiness, and lived on, like some wits, extempore. But such men, with all their virtues and all their genius, live only for themselves; they are not

It would seem by the following note, that this hourly account of himself was in consequence of the connubial mandate of his fair despot.

"Dear Prue,

"It is a strange thing, because you are handsome, that you will not behave yourself with the obedience that people of worse features do — but that I must be always giving you an account of every trifle and minute of my time. I send this to tell you I am waiting to be sent for again when my Lord Wharton is stirring."

links in the golden chain of society. STEELE, in the waste of his splendid talents, had raised sudden enmities and transient friendships; the world uses such men as Eastern travellers do fountains; they drink their waters, and when their thirst is appeased —turn their backs on them! STEELE lived to be forgotten. He opened his career with folly; he hurried through it in a tumult of existence; and he closed it by an involuntary exile, amidst the wrecks of his fortune and his mind!

If STEELE had the honour of the invention of those periodical papers, devoted to elegant literature and popular instruction, which enlightened and amended the national genius in his own times, this man of volition himself, may instruct

posterity of the influence of the moral, over the literary character*.

* STEELE, in one of his numerous periodical works, has, in the twelfth number of the Theatre, drawn an exquisite contrast between himself and his friend ADDISON—it will finely harmonize with the present calamity. It is a cabinet picture. Steele's careful pieces, when warm with his subject, had a higher spirit, a richer flavour, than the equable softness of Addison, who is only beautiful!

"There never was a more strict friendship than between these gentlemen; nor had they ever any difference but what proceeded from their different way of pursuing the same thing: the one, with patience, foresight, and temperate address, always waited and stemmed the torrent; while the other often plunged himself into it, and was as often taken out by the temper of him, who stood weeping on the bank for his safety, whom he could not dissuade from leaping into it. Thus these two men lived for some years last past, shunning each other, but still preserving the most passionate concern for their mutual welfare.

But when they met, they were as unreserved as boys, and talked of the greatest affairs, upon which they saw where they differed, without pressing (what they knew impossible) to convert each other."

The more than brotherly intercourse of these two fine geniuses in the happiest period of their lives, when they were writing the Spectators, is marked by a very singular anecdote recorded by the Rev. David Scurlock, who was a relative of Lady Steele's. In a letto Mr. Nichols he writes, "Steele and Addison wrote the Spectators, &c. chiefly in the room where I now write; they rented the house of my father, for occasional retirement, and kept an housekeeper between them. It happened that this housekeeper proved to be in a situation that could not escape the prying eye of slanderous observation; when Steele asked Addison very gravely, what they should do in such a dreadful predicament? "Why," says Addison, "since it is now past remedy, there is nothing to be done but this; if it proves to be a black child, you shall take it; if a fair one, the care of it shall fall to my lot." The story is thus told with great *naiveté* by the Rev. David Scurlock.

LITERARY DISAPPOINTMENTS

DISORDERING THE INTELLECT.

Leland and Collins.

This awful calamity may be traced in the fate of our two authors; where one exhausted the finer faculties of his mind in the grandest views, and sunk under gigantic tasks; the other enthusiast sacrificed his reason and his happiness, to his imagination.

Leland, the father of our antiquaries, was an accomplished scholar; and his ample mind had embraced the languages of Greece and Rome; those of his own age; and the ancient ones of his own country: thus he held all human learning by its three vast chains. He travelled abroad,

and he cultivated poetry with the ardour he could even feel for the acquisition of words. On his return home, among other royal favours, he was appointed by Henry VIII. the King's Antiquary; a title honourably created for LELAND, for with him it became extinct. By this office he was empowered to search after English Antiquities; to review the libraries of all the religious institutions, and to bring the records of antiquity "out of deadly darkness into lively light." This extensive power fed a passion already formed by the study of our old rude historians, while his elegant taste perceived that they wanted those graces which he could lend them; and as he proceeded in his enquiries, they inspired the most arduous enterprize.

Six years were occupied by uninterrupted travel and study to survey our national an-

tiquities; to note down every thing observable for the history of the country, and the honour of the nation. What a magnificent view has he sketched of this learned journey; in search of knowledge, LELAND wandered on the sea-coasts, and in the midland; surveyed towns and cities and rivers; castles, cathedrals and monasteries; tumuli, coins, and inscriptions; collected authors, transcribed MSS. If antiquarianism pored, genius too meditated, in this sublime industry.

Another six years were devoted to shape and to polish the immense collections he had amassed. All this untired labour and continued study were rewarded by Henry VIII. It is delightful, from its rarity, to record the gratitude of a patron: HENRY was worthy of LELAND; and the genius of

the author was magnificent as that of the monarch who had created it.

Nor was the gratitude of LELAND silent: he seems to have been in the habit of perpetuating his spontaneous emotions in elegant Latin verse. Our author has fancifully expressed his gratitude to the King:

"Sooner," he says, "shall the seas float without their silent inhabitants; the thorny hedges cease to hide the birds — the oak to spread its boughs, and Flora to paint the meadows with flowers;

"Quàm Rex dive, tuum labatur pectore nostro
Nomen, quod studiis portus et aura meis."

"Than thou, great King, my bosom cease to hail,
Who o'er my studies breath'st a favouring gale."

LELAND was, indeed, alive to the kindness of his royal patron, and among his nu-

merous literary projects was one of writing a history of all the palaces of Henry, in imitation of Procopius, who described those of the Emperor Justinian. He had already delighted the royal ear in a beautiful effusion of fancy and antiquarianism, in his *Cygnea Cantio*, the Song of the Swans. The swan of LELAND melodiously floating down the Thames, from Oxford to Greenwich, chants, as she passes along, the ancient names and honours of the towns, the castles, and the villages.

LELAND presented his "Strena, or a New Year's Gift," to the King.—It consists of an account of his studies; and sketches, with a fervid and vast imagination, his magnificent labour, which he had already inscribed with the title *De Antiquitate Britannica*, to be divided into as many

books as there were shires. All parts of this address of the King's Antiquary to the King, bear the stamp of his imagination and his taste. He opens his intention of improving, by the classical graces of composition, the rude labours of our ancestors; for,

"Except Truth be delicately clothed in purpure, her written verytees can scant find a reader."

Our old writers, he tells his sovereign, had, indeed,

"From time to time preserved the acts of your predecessors, and the fortunes of your realm, with great diligence, and no less faith; would to God with like eloquence!"

An exclamation of fine taste, when taste was yet a stranger in the country. And when he alludes to the knowledge of

British affairs scattered among the Roman, as well as our own writers, his fervid fancy breaks forth with an image at once simple and sublime:

"I trust," says LELAND, "so to open the window, that the light shall be seen so long, that is to say, by the space of a whole thousand years stopped up, and the old glory of your Britain to re-flourish through the world *."

And he pathetically concludes,

* LELAND, in his magnificent plan, included several curious departments. Jealous of the literary glory of the Italians, whom he compares to the Greeks for accounting all nations barbarous and unlettered, he had composed four books *De Viris illustribus*, on English Authors, to force them to acknowledge the illustrious genius, and the great men of Britain. Three books *de Nobilitate Britannica*, were to be "as an ornament and a right comely garland."

"Should I live to perform those things that are already begun, I trust that your realm shall so well be known, once painted with its native colours, that it shall give place to the glory of no other region."

The grandeur of this design was a constituent part of the genius of LELAND, but not less that presaging melancholy which even here betrays itself, and frequently in his verses. Every thing about LELAND was marked by his own greatness; his country and his countrymen were ever present; and, by the excitement of his feelings, even his humbler pursuits were elevated into patriotism. Henry died the year after he received "The New Year's Gift." From that moment, in losing the greatest patron for the greatest work, LELAND appears to have felt the staff which

he had used to turn at pleasure for his stay, break in his hands.

He had new patrons to court, while engaged in labours for which a single life had been too short. The melancholy that cherishes genius, may also destroy it. LELAND, brooding over his voluminous labours, seemed to love and to dread them; sometimes to pursue them with rapture, and sometimes to shrink from them with despair. His generous temper had once shot forwards to posterity; but he now calms his struggling hopes and doubts, and confines his literary ambition to his own country and his own age.

"POSTERITATIS AMOR DUBIUS.

"Posteritatis amor mihi perblanditur, et ultro
Promittit libris secula multa meis.
At non tam facile est oculato imponere, nosco
Quàm non sim tali dignus honore frui.

Græcia magniloquos vates desiderat ipsa,
Roma suos etiam disperiise dolet.
Exemplis quum sim claris edoctus ab istis,
Quî sperem Musas vivere posse meas ?
Certè mî sat erit præsenti scribere seclo,
Auribus et patriæ complacuisse meæ."

IMITATED.

" POSTERITY, thy soothing love I feel,
That o'er my volumes many an age may steal :
But hard it is the well-clear'd eye to cheat
With honours undeserv'd, too fond deceit!
Greece, greatly eloquent, and full of fame,
Sighs for the want of many a perish'd name ;
And Rome o'er her illustrious children mourns,
Their fame departing with their mould'ring urns.
How can I hope, by such examples shewn,
More than a transient day, a passing sun ?
Enough for me to win the present age,
And please a brother with a brother's page."

By other verses, addressed to Cranmer, it would appear that LELAND was experiencing anxieties to which he had not been accustomed — and one may suspect, by the opening image of his "Supellex," that his pension was irregular, and that he began, as authors do in these hard cases, to value "the furniture" of his mind, above that of his house.

"AD THOMAM CRANMERUM,
CANTIOR. ARCHIEPISCOP.

"Est congesta mihi domi Supellex
Ingens, aurea, nobilis, venusta,
Quâ totus studeo Britaniarum
Vero reddere gloriam nitori.
Sed Fortuna meis noverca cœptis
Jam felicibus invidet maligna.
Quare, ne pereant brevi vel horâ
Multarum mihi noctium labores

Omnes, et patriæ simul decora
Ornamenta cadant," &c. &c.

IMITATED.

" The furnitures that fill my house,
The vast and beautiful disclose,
All noble, and the store is gold;
Our ancient glory here unroll'd.
But Fortune checks my daring claim,
A step-mother severe to Fame.
A smile malignantly she throws
Just at the story's prosperous close.
And thus must the unfinish'd tale,
And all my many vigils fail,
And must my country's honour fall;
In one brief hour must perish all?"

But, conscious of the greatness of his labours, he would obtain the favour of the Archbishop, by promising a share of his own fame —

" ——— pretium sequetur amplum—
Sic nomen tibi litteræ elegantes
Rectè perpetuum dabunt, suosque
Partim vel titulos tibi receptos
Concedet memori Britannus ore:
Sic te posteritas amabit omnis,
Et famâ super æthera innotesces."

IMITATED.

" But take the ample glorious meed,
To letter'd elegance decreed,
When Britain's mindful voice shall bend,
And with her own thy honours blend,
As she from thy kind hands receives
Her titles drawn on Glory's leaves,
And back reflects them on thy name,
Till Time shall love thy mounting fame."

Thus was LELAND, like the melancholic, withdrawn entirely into the world of his own ideas; his imagination delighting in reveries, while his industry was exhaust-

ing itself in labour. His manners were not free from haughtiness — his meagre and expressive physiognomy indicates the melancholy and the majesty of his mind; not old age, but the premature wrinkles of those nightly labours he has himself recorded. — All these characteristics are so strongly marked in the bust of LELAND, that Lavater had triumphed had he studied it*.

Labour had long been felt as voluptuousness, by LELAND; and this is among the Calamities of Literature, and all those studies which deeply busy the intellect

* What reason is there to suppose with GRANGER that his bust, so admirably engraven by Grignion, is supposititious? Probably, struck by the premature old age of a man who died in his fortieth year, he condemned it by its appearance; but not with the eye of the physiognomist.

and the fancy. There is a poignant delight in study, often subversive of human happiness. Men of genius, from their ideal state, drop into the cold formalities of society, to encounter its evils, its disappointments, its neglect, and perhaps its persecutions. When such minds discover the world will only become a friend on its own terms, then has the cup of their wrath overflowed; the learned grow morose, and the witty sarcastic; but more indelible emotions in a highly-excited imagination often produce those delusions, which Darwin calls Hallucinations, and sometimes terminate in mania. The haughtiness, the melancholy, and the aspiring genius of LELAND, were tending to a disordered intellect. Incipient insanity is a mote floating in the understanding, escaping all observation, when the mind

is capable of observing itself, but seems a constituent part of the mind itself when that is completely covered with its cloud.

LELAND did not reach even the maturity of life, the period at which his stupendous works were to be executed. He was seized by phrenzy. The causes of his insanity were never known. The Papists declared he was mad because he had embraced the new religion; his malicious rival Polydore Vergil, because he had promised what he could not perform; duller prosaïsts because his poetical turn had made him conceited. The grief and melancholy of a fine genius, and perhaps an irregular pension, his enemies have not noticed.

The ruins of LELAND'S mind were viewed in his library; volumes on volumes stupendously heaped together, and masses of notes scattered here and there; all

the vestiges of his genius, and its distraction. His collections were seized on by honest and dishonest hands; many were treasured, but some were stolen. Hearne zealously arranged a series of volumes from the fragments; but the Britannia of CAMDEN, the London of STOWE, and the Chronicles of HOLINSHED, are only a few whose waters silently welled from the pure spring of LELAND's genius; and that nothing might be wanting to preserve some relick of that fine imagination which was always working in his poetic soul, his own description of his learned journey over the kingdom was a spark, which, falling into the inflammable mind of a Poet, produced the singular and patriotic poem of the Polyolbion of DRAYTON. Thus the genius of LELAND has come to us diffused through a variety of other men's; and

what he intended to produce, it has required many to perform.

A singular inscription appeared on his monument, in which LELAND speaks of himself, in the style he was accustomed to use. And as Weever tells us it was affixed to his monument, as he had heard by tradition, it was probably a relick snatched from his general wreck—for it could not with propriety have been composed after his death *.

Quantùm Rhenano debet Germania docto,
Tantùm debebit terra Britanna mihi.
Ille suæ gentis ritus et nomina prisca
Æstivo fecit lucidiora die.
Ipse antiquarum rerum quoque magnus amator
Ornabo patriæ lumina clara meæ.
Quæ cum prodierint niveis inscripta tabellis,
Tum testes nostræ sedulitatis erunt.

* Ancient Funerall Monnments, p. 692.

IMITATED.

What Germany to learn'd Rhenanus owes,
That for my Britain shall my toil unclose;
His volumes mark their customs, names, and climes,
And brighten, with a summer's light, old times.
I also, touch'd by the same love, will write,
To ornament my country's splendid light,
Which shall, inscrib'd on snowy tablets, be
Full many a witness of my industry.

Another example of literary disappointment disordering the intellect, may be contemplated in the fate of the Poet COLLINS.

Several interesting incidents may be supplied to Johnson's narrative of the short and obscure life of this Poet, who more than any other of our martyrs to the lyre has thrown over all his images and his thoughts, a tenderness of mind, and breathed

a freshness over the pictures of poetry, which the mighty MILTON has not exceeded, and the laborious GRAY has not attained. But he immolated happiness, and at length reason, to his imagination! The incidents most interesting in the life of COLLINS would be those events which elude the vulgar biographer; that invisible train of emotions which were gradually passing in his mind; those passions which moulded his genius, and which broke it! Who could record the vacillations of a poetic temper; its early hope, and its late despair; its wild gaiety, and its settled phrenzy; but the Poet himself? Yet COLLINS has left behind no memorial of the wanderings of his alienated mind, but the errors of his life!

At college he published his "Persian Eclogues," as they were first called, to

which, when he thought they were not distinctly Persian, he gave the more general title of "Oriental;" yet the passage of Hassan, in the desert, is more correct in its scenery, than perhaps the Poet himself was aware. The publication was attended with no success; but the first misfortune a Poet meets, will rarely deter him from incurring more. He suddenly quitted the University, and has been censured for not having consulted his friends when he rashly resolved to live by the pen. But he had no friends! His father had died in embarrassed circumstances; and COLLINS was residing at the University on the stipend allowed him by his Uncle, Colonel Martin, who was abroad. He was indignant at a repulse he met with at college; and alive to the name of Author and Poet, the ardent

and simple youth imagined that a nobler field of action opened on him in the metropolis, than was presented by the flat uniformity of a collegiate life. To whatever spot the youthful Poet flies, that spot seems Parnassus, as Civility seems Patronage. He hurried to town, in all gaiety; and presented himself before the cousin, who paid his small allowance from his uncle, in a fashionable dress, with a feather in his hat. The graver gentleman, his cousin, did not succeed in his attempt at sending him back, with all the stiffness of his remonstrance, and the terror of his information, that COLLINS had not a single guinea of his own, and was dressed in a coat he would never pay for. The young Bard turned from him as "a dull fellow," an usual phrase, which described

those who did not think as he would have them. The grave cousin was, however, obdurate; and the young Poet rushed away to revel in the blaze of life, the perpetual delights of ever-varying scenes.

Thus was that moment come, so much desired, and scarcely yet dreaded, which was to produce those effusions of fancy and learning, for which COLLINS had prepared himself by previous studies. About this time Johnson* has given a finer picture of the intellectual powers, and the literary attainments of COLLINS, than in the life he afterwards composed. COLLINS was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages; "full of hopes and full of projects, versed in many languages,

* In a letter to Joseph Warton.

high in fancy, and strong in retention." Such was the language of Johnson, when, warmed by his own imagination, he could write like Longinus; and at that after-period, when assuming the chastising austerity of critical discussion to write the lives of Poets, even in the coldness of his recollections, he describes COLLINS as "a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties."

A chasm of several years remains to be filled. He was projecting works of labour, and creating productions of taste; and he has been reproached for irresolution, and even for indolence. Let us catch his feelings from the facts as they rise together, and learn whether COLLINS must endure censure, or excite sympathy.

When he was living loosely about town, he occasionally wrote many short

poems in the house of a friend, who witnesses that he burnt as rapidly as he wrote. He wrote his odes for a present supply: they were purchased by Millar, and form but a slight pamphlet; yet all the interest of that great bookseller could never introduce them into notice. Not even an idle compliment is recorded to have been sent to the Poet. When we now consider that among these odes was one of the most popular in the language, with some of the most exquisitely poetical, two reflections will occur; the difficulty of a young writer without connections, obtaining the public ear; and the languor of the poetical connoisseurs, which sometimes suffers poems, that have not yet grown up to authority, to be buried on the shelf. What the outraged feelings of the Poet were, appeared when, some time after-

wards, he became rich enough to express them. Having obtained some fortune by the death of his uncle, he made good to the publisher the deficiency of the unsold odes, and, in his haughty resentment of the public taste, consigned the impression to the flames!

Who shall now paint the feverish and delicate feelings of a young poet such as COLLINS, who had twice addressed the public, and twice had been repulsed? He, whose poetic temper Johnson has finely painted, at the happy moment when he felt its influence, as "delighting to rove through the meadows of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, and repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens!"

It cannot be doubted, and the recorded facts will demonstrate it, that the poetical

disappointments of COLLINS were secretly preying on his spirit, and repressing his firmest exertions. His mind richly stored with literature, and his soul alive to taste, were ever leaning to the impulse of Nature and study—and thus he projected a "History of the Revival of Learning," and a translation of "Aristotle's Poetics," to be illustrated by a large Commentary.

But "his great fault," says Johnson, "was his *irresolution;* or the frequent calls of *immediate necessity* broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose." COLLINS, was, however, not idle, though without application; for, when reproached with idleness by a friend, he shewed instantly several sheets of his version of Aristotle, and many embryos of some lives he had engaged to compose for the Biographia Britannica; he never brought either

to perfection! What then was this *irresolution*, but the vacillations of a mind broken and confounded? He had exercised too constantly the highest faculties of fiction, and he had precipitated himself into the dreariness of real life. — None but a Poet can conceive, for none but a Poet can experience, the secret wounds inflicted on a mind made up of romantic fancy and tenderness of emotion, who has staked his happiness on his imagination; and who feels neglect, as ordinary men might the sensation of being let down into a sepulchre, and being buried alive. The mind of TASSO, a brother in fancy to COLLINS, became disordered by the opposition of the Critics, but their perpetual neglect had not injured it less. The elegant HOPE of the ancients was represented holding some flowers, the promise of

the spring, or some spikes of corn, indicative of approaching harvest — but the HOPE of COLLINS had scattered its seed, and they remained buried in the earth.

To our poor Bard the oblivion which covered his works appeared to him eternal, as those works now seem to us immortal. He had created HOPE, with deep and enthusiastic feeling!

"With eyes so fair —
Whispering promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail;
And Hope, enchanted, smil'd, and wav'd
her golden hair!"

The few years Collins passed in the metropolis he was subsisting with, or upon his friends; and being a pleasing companion, he obtained many literary acquaintances. At this period Johnson knew him, and describes him; "His appearance was

decent, and his knowledge considerable; his views extensive, and his conversation elegant." He was a constant frequenter at the literary resorts of the Bedford and Slaughter's; and Armstrong, Hill, Garrick, and Foote, frequently consulted him on their pieces before they appeared in public. From his intimacy with Garrick, he obtained a free admission into the Green-room; and probably it was at this period, among his other projects, that he planned several tragedies, which, Johnson observes, "he only planned." There is a feature in COLLINS's character which requires more minute attention. He is represented as a man of cheerful dispositions; and it has been my study to detect only a melancholy, which was preying on the very source of life itself. COLLINS was, indeed, born to charm his friends; for fancy and elegance

were never absent from his susceptible mind, rich in its stores, and versatile in its emotions. He himself indicates his own character in his address to HOME:

"Go! nor, regardless while these numbers boast
My short-liv'd bliss, forget MY SOCIAL NAME."

Johnson has told us of his cheerful dispositions; and one who knew him well observes, that "in the green-room he made diverting observations on the vanity and false consequence of that class of people, and his manner of relating them to his particular friends was extremely entertaining;" but the same friend acknowledges that "some letters which he received from COLLINS, though chiefly on business, have in them some flights which strongly mark his character, and for which reason I have preserved them." We cannot decide of

the temper of a man viewed only in a circle of friends, who listen to the ebullitions of wit or fancy; the social warmth for a moment throws into forgetfulness his secret sorrow. The most melancholy man is frequently the most delightful companion, and peculiarly endowed with the talent of satirical playfulness and vivacity of humour *. But what was the true life

* Burton, the author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," offers a striking instance. Bishop Kennett, in his curious "Register and Chronicle," has preserved the following particulars of this author. "In an interval of vapours *he would be extremely pleasant, and raise laughter in any company.* Yet I have heard, that nothing at last could make him laugh, but, going down to the Bridge-foot at Oxford, and hearing the bargemen scold and storm and swear at one another; at which he would set his hands to his sides, and laugh most profusely; yet in his chamber so mute and mopish, that he was sus-

of COLLINS, separated from its adventitious circumstances? It was a life of Want, never chequered by Hope, that was striving to elude its own observation by hurrying into some temporary dissipation. But the hours of melancholy and solitude were sure to return; these were marked on the dial of his life, and, when they struck, the gay and lively COLLINS, like one of his own enchanted beings, as surely relapsed into his natural shape. To the perpetual recollections of his poetical disappointments,

pected to be *felo de se*." With what a fine strain of poetic feeling has a modern Bard touched this subject:

"As a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow,
While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
So the cheek may be ting'd with a warm sunny smile,
Tho' the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while."

MOORE's Irish Melodies.

are we to attribute this unsettled state of his mind, and the perplexity of his studies. To these he was perpetually reverting, as after a lapse of several years, he shewed, in burning his ill-fated odes. And what was the result of his literary life? I have heard that he returned to his native city of Chichester in a state almost of nakedness, destitute, diseased, and wild in despair, to hide himself in the arms of a sister.

The cloud had long been gathering over his convulsed intellect; and the fortune he acquired on the death of his uncle served only for personal indulgences, which rather accelerated his disorder. There were, at times, some awful pauses in the alienation of his mind — but he had withdrawn it from study. It was in one of these intervals that Thomas Warton told Johnson that when he met Collins tra-

velling, he took up a book the Poet carried with him, from curiosity, to see what companion a man of letters had chosen — it was an English Testament. "I have but one book," said COLLINS, "but that is the best." This circumstance is recorded on his tomb.

"He join'd pure faith to strong poetic powers,
And in reviving Reason's lucid hours,
Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
And rightly deem'd the Book of God the best."

At Chichester tradition has preserved some striking and affecting occurrences of his last days; he would haunt the ailes and cloisters of the cathedral, roving days and nights together, loving their

"Dim religious light."

And, when the choristers chaunted their

anthem, the listening and bewildered Poet, carried out of himself by the solemn strains, and his own too susceptible imagination, moaned and shrieked, and awoke a sadness and a terror most affecting in so solemn a place; their friend, their kinsman, and their Poet, was before them, an aweful image of human misery and ruined genius!

This interesting circumstance is thus alluded to on his monument:

"Ye walls that echoed to his frantic moan,
Guard the due record of this grateful stone:
Strangers to him, enamour'd of his lays,
This fond memorial of his talents raise."

A voluntary subscription raised the monument of COLLINS. The elegant sculptor of our own times*, combining with a Poet, or Poets, has thrown out on the eloquent

* Mr. Flaxman.

marble all that fancy would consecrate; the tomb is itself a poem.

There COLLINS is represented as sitting in a reclining posture, during a lucid interval of his afflicting malady, with a calm and benign aspect, as if seeking refuge from his misfortunes in the consolations of the Gospel, which lie open before him, whilst his lyre, and "the Ode on the Passions," as a scroll, are thrown together neglected on the ground. Upon the pediment on the tablet are placed in relief two female figures of LOVE and PITY, entwined each in the arms of the other; the proper emblems of the genius of his poetry*.

* I am indebted to my friend, the Rev. J. DALLAWAY, for a correct description of Collins's tomb; and in his forthcoming history of Sussex we may hope to be favoured with a plate of this beautiful monument.

Langhorne, who gave an edition of COLLINS's poems with all the fervour of a votary, made an observation not perfectly correct: "It is observable," (he says) "that none of his poems bear the marks of an amorous disposition; and that he is one of those few poets who have sailed to Delphi, without touching at Cythera. In the "Ode to the Passions," *Love* has been omitted." There, indeed, Love does not form an important personage; yet, at the close, *Love* makes his transient appearance with *Joy* and *Mirth* — "a gay fantastic rond."

"And, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings."

It is certain, however, that COLLINS considered the amatory passion, as unfriendly to poetic originality; for he al-

ludes to the whole race of the Provençal poets, by accusing them of only employing

"Love, only Love, her forceless numbers mean."

Collins affected to slight the urchin; for he himself had been once in love, and his wit has preserved the history of his passion; he was attached to a young lady who was born the day before him, and who seems not to have been very poetically tempered, for she did not return his ardour. On that occasion, he said "that he came into the world *a day after the Fair*."

Langhorne composed two sonnets, which seem only preserved in the Monthly Review, in which he was a writer, and probably inserted them; they bear a particular reference to the misfortunes of our Poet. In one he represents Wisdom, in the form of Addison, reclining in "the old and

honoured shade of Magdalen," and thus addressing

" The poor shade of COLLINS, wandering by;
The tear stood trembling in his gentle eye,
With modest grief reluctant, while he said—
'Sweet Bard, belov'd by every Muse in vain!
With pow'rs, whose fineness wrought their own decay;
Ah! wherefore, thoughtless, didst thou yield the rein
To Fancy's will, and chase the meteor ray?
Ah! why forget thy own Hyblæan strain,
'Peace rules the breast, where REASON rules the day.'"

The last line is most happily applied; it is a verse by the unfortunate Bard himself; heightening the contrast of his present state! Langhorne has feelingly

painted the fatal indulgencies of such a character as COLLINS.

" Of Fancy's too prevailing power beware!
Oft has she bright on Life's fair morning shone;
Oft seated HOPE on REASON'S sovereign throne,
Then clos'd the scene, in darkness and despair.
Of all her gifts, of all her powers possest,
Let not her flattery win thy youthful ear,
Nor vow long faith to such a various guest,
False at the last, tho' now perchance full dear;
The casual lover with her charms is blest,
But woe to them her magic bands that w ear!

The criticism of JOHNSON on the poetry of COLLINS, that " as men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of COLLINS may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure," might al-

most have been furnished from the lumbering pen of old Dennis. But COLLINS from the poetical, never *extorted* praise, for it is given *spontaneously ;* he is much *more loved* than *esteemed,* for he does not give *little pleasure.* Johnson, too, describes " his lines as of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants." Even this verbal criticism, though it appeals to the eye, and not to the ear, is false criticism; since COLLINS is certainly the most musical of poets. How could that Lyrist be harsh in his diction, who almost draws tears from our eyes, while his melodious lines and picturing epithets are remembered by his readers? He is devoured with as much enthusiasm by one party, as he is imperfectly relished by the other.

But on this criticism, let me state a poetical fact. Observe, that in COLLINS, Johnson has given two characters of this poet; the one composed at a period when that great critic, though never a Longinus, was still susceptible of the seduction of the imagination; in this portrait though some features of the Poet are impressively drawn, yet the genius and the whole countenance of COLLINS is most indistinctly caught, and the likeness is, therefore, incomplete. There is not even a slight indication of the chief feature in COLLINS's genius; that tenderness and delicacy of emotion, and those fresh and vivid picturesque creative strokes; all this was a sense which Nature had denied to Johnson's robust intellect. He was but a stately ox in the fields of Parnassus, not the animal of Nature. When many years

afterwards, during his poetical biography, that long Lent of Criticism, in which he mortified our poetical feelings, by accommodating his to the populace of critics, and "the vulgar great"—so faint were former recollections, and so imperfect were those feelings which he seemed once to have possessed—that he could do nothing but write on COLLINS with much less warmth than he has written on Blackmore! Johnson is, indeed, the first of Critics, when his powerful logic investigates objects submitted to reason; but great sense is not always combined with delicacy of taste; and there is in poetry a province which Aristotle himself may never have entered.

THE REWARDS OF ORIENTAL STUDENTS.

At a time when oriental studies were in their infancy in this country, Simon Ockley, animated by the illustrious example of Pococke, and the laborious diligence of Prideaux, devoted his life and his fortune to these novel researches, which necessarily involved both. With that enthusiasm which the ancient votary experienced, and with that patient suffering the modern martyr has endured, he pursued, till he accomplished, the useful object of his labours. He, perhaps, was the first who exhibited to us in the East, other heroes than those of Rome and Greece, Sages as contemplative, and a people more magnificent even than those

iron masters of the world. Among other oriental productions, the most considerable is "The History of the Saracens." The first volume appeared in 1708, and the second ten years afterwards. In the preface to the last volume, the oriental student pathetically gives way to his feelings, counts over his sorrows, and triumphs over his disappointments; the most remarkable part is the date of the place from whence this preface was written—he triumphantly closes his labours in the confinement of Cambridge Castle for debt!

Ockley lamenting his small proficiency in the Persian studies, resolves to attain to them.

"How often (he exclaims) have I endeavoured to perfect myself in that language, but my malignant and envious stars still frustrated my attempts; but they shall sooner

alter their courses, than extinguish my resolution of quenching that thirst, which the little I have had of it, hath already excited."

And he states the deficiencies of his history with the most natural modesty:

"Had I not been forced to snatch every thing that I have, as it were, out of the fire, our Saracen history should have been ushered into the world after a different manner." He is fearful that something would be ascribed to his indolence or negligence, that "ought more justly to be attributed to the influence of inexorable necessity. Could I have been master of my own time and circumstances," &c.

Shame on those pretended patrons who, appointing "a Professor of the Oriental Languages," counteract the purpose of the professorship, by their utter neglect of the Professor, whose stipend cannot keep

him on the spot where only he ought to dwell. And OCKLEY complains too of that hypocritical curiosity which pretends to take an interest in things it cares little about, perpetually requiring, as soon as a work is announced, that it should come out. But while the Author is daily importuned, his care and application are never calculated; and often when published, never valued by these Pharisees of Literature, who can only build sepulchres to ancient prophets, but would never believe in a living one. Some of these OCKLEY met with on the publication of his first volume; they run it down as the strangest story they had ever heard; they had never met with such folks as the Arabians! "A Reverend Dignitary asked me if, when I wrote that book, I had not lately been reading the history of Oliver Cromwell?" Such was the plaudit the Oriental Student

received, and returned to grow pale over his MSS. But when Petis de la Croix, observes Ockley, was pursuing the same track of study as himself, in the patronage of Louis XIV. he found books, leisure, and encouragement; and when the great Colbert desired him to compose the life of Genkis Chan, he considered a period of ten years not too much to be allowed the author. — And then Ockley proceeds:

"But my unhappy condition hath always been widely different from any thing that could admit of such an exactness. Fortune seems only to have given me a taste of it out of spite, on purpose that I might regret the loss of it."

He describes his two journies to Oxford, for his first volume; but in his second, matters fared worse with him:

"Either my domestic affairs were grown

much worse, or I less able to bear them; or what is most probable, both."

Ingenuous confession! fruits of a life devoted in its struggles, to important literature! and we murmur when genius is irritable, and erudition is morose! But let us proceed with OCKLEY:

"I was forced to take the advantage of the slumber of my cares, that never slept when I was awake; and if they did not incessantly interrupt my studies, were sure to succeed them with no less constancy than night doth the day."

This is the cry of agony. He who reads this without sympathy, ought to reject these volumes as the idlest he ever read; and honour me with his contempt. But we have not yet finished with Ockley: the close of his preface shews a love-like tenderness for his studies; although he

must quit life without bringing them to perfection, he opens his soul to posterity, and tells them, in the language of prophecy, that if they will bestow encouragement on our youth, the misfortunes he has described will be remedied. He, indeed, is aware that these students

"Will hardly come in upon the prospect of finding leisure, in a prison, to transcribe those papers for the press which they have collected with indefatigable labour, and oftentimes at the expence of their rest, and all the other conveniences of life, for the service of the publick."

Yet the exulting martyr of literature, at the moment he is fast bound to the stake, will not consider a prison so dreadful a reward for literary labours.

"I can assure them, from my own experience, that I have enjoyed more true liberty,

more happy leisure, and more solid repose in six months here, than in thrice the same number of years before. Evil is the condition of that historian who undertakes to write the lives of others, before he knows how to live himself. Yet I have no just reason to be angry with the world; I never stood in need of its assistance in my life, but I found it always very liberal of its advice; for which I am so much the more beholden to it, by how much the more I did always in my judgment give the possession of wisdom, the preference to that of riches*."

* Dr. EDMUND CASTELL offers a remarkable instance to illustrate our present investigation. He more than devoted his life to his *Lexicon Heptaglotton*. It is not possible, if there are tears that are to be bestowed on the afflictions of learned men, to read his pathetic address to Charles II. without forbearing them. He laments the seventeen years of incredible pains, during which he thought himself idle when he had not devoted sixteen or eighteen hours a day to this labour; that he had expended

Poor Ockley, always a student, and rarely what is called a man of the world, once encountered a literary calamity which frequently occurs when an author finds himself among the vapid triflers and the polished cynics of the fashionable circle. Something like a patron he found in Harley, the Earl of Oxford, and once

all his inheritance, it is said more than twelve thousand pounds; that it had broken his constitution, and left him blind as well as poor. When this invaluable Polyglott was published, the copies remained unsold in his hands; for the learned Castell had anticipated the curiosity and knowledge of the public by a full century. He had so completely devoted himself to Oriental Studies, that they had a very remarkable consequence, for he had totally forgotten his own language, and could scarcely spell a single word. This appears in some of his English letters, preserved by Mr. Nichols in his valuable "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century,"

had the unlucky honour of dining at the table of my Lord Treasurer. It is probable that OCKLEY, from retired habits, and severe studies, was not at all accomplished

vol. IV. It further appears, that 500 of these Lexicons, unsold at the time of his death, were placed, by Dr. Castell's niece, in a room so little regarded, that scarcely one complete copy escaped the rats, and "the whole load of learned rags sold only for seven pounds." The work at this moment would find purchasers, I believe, at forty or fifty pounds.—The learned SALE, who first gave the world a genuine version of the Koran, and who had so zealously laboured in forming that "Universal History" which was the pride of our country, pursued his studies through a life of wants — and this great Orientalist, I grieve to degrade the memoirs of a man of learning by such mortifications, when he quitted his studies, too often wanted a change of linen, and often wandered in the streets in search of some compassionate friend who would supply him with the meal of the day!

in the *suaviter in modo*, of which greater geniuses than OCKLEY have so surlily despaired. How he behaved I cannot narrate; probably he delivered himself with as great simplicity at the table of the Lord Treasurer, as on the wrong side of Cambridge Castle gate. The embarrassment this simplicity drew him into, is very fully stated in the following copious apology he addressed to the Earl of Oxford, which I have transcribed from the original, and perhaps it may be an useful memorial to some men of letters as little polished as the learned OCKLEY.

"*Cambridge, July* 15, 1714.

"MY LORD,

"I was so struck with horror and amazement two days ago, that I cannot possibly express it. A friend of mine shewed me a letter, part of the contents of which were, 'That

Professor Ockley had given such extreme offence by some uncourtly answers to some gentlemen at my Lord Treasurer's table, that it would be in vain to make any further application to him.'

"My Lord, it is impossible for me to recollect, at this distance of time. All that I can say is this; that, as on the one side for a man to come to his patron's table with a design to affront either him or his friends supposes him a perfect natural, a mere idiot; so on the other side it would be extreme severe, if a person whose education was far distant from the politeness of a court, should, upon the account of an unguarded expression, or some little inadvertency in his behaviour, suffer a capital sentence.

"Which is my case, if I have forfeited your Lordship's favour; which God forbid! That man is involved in double ruin that is not only forsaken by his friend, but, which is the un-

avoidable consequence, exposed to the malice and contempt, not only of enemies, but, what is still more grievous, of all sorts of fools.

"It is not the talent of every well-meaning man to converse with his superiors with due decorum; for, either when he reflects upon the vast distance of their station above his own, he is struck dumb and almost insensible; or else their condescension and courtly behaviour encourages him to be too familiar. To steer exactly between these two extremes requires not only a good intention, but presence of mind, and long custom.

"Another article in my friend's letter was, 'That somebody had informed your Lordship, that I was a very sot.' When first I had the honour to be known to your Lordship, I could easily foresee that there would be persons enough that would envy me upon that account, and do what in them lay to traduce me. Let Haman enjoy never so much

himself, it is all nothing, it does him no good till poor Mordechai is hanged out of his way.

"But I never feared the being censured upon that account. Here, in the University, I converse with none but persons of the most distinguished reputations both for learning and virtue, and receive from them daily as great marks of respect and esteem, which I should not have, if that imputation were true. It is most certain that I do indulge myself the freedom of drinking a cheerful cup, at proper seasons, among my friends; but no otherwise than is done by thousands of honest men who never forfeit their character by it. And whoever doth no more than so, deserves no more to be called a sot, than a man that eats a hearty meal would be willing to be called a glutton.

"As for those detractors, if I have but the least assurance of your Lordship's favour, I can very easily despise them. They are

Nati consumere fruges. They need not trouble themselves about what other people do; for whatever they eat and drink, it is only robbing the poor. Resigning myself entirely to your Lordship's goodness and pardon, I conclude this necessary apology with like provocation, That *I would be content he should take my character from any person that had a good one of his own.*

"I am, with all submission,

"My Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient, &c.

"SIMON OCKLEY."

To the honour of the Earl of Oxford, this unlucky piece of awkwardness at table, in giving "uncourtly answers," did not interrupt his regard for the poor Oriental Student; for several years afterwards the correspondence of OCKLEY was still acceptable to the Earl.

If the letters of the widows and children of many of our eminent authors were collected — they would demonstrate the great fact, tbat the man who is a husband or a father ought not to be an author. They might weary with a monotonous cry, and usually would be dated from the gaol or the garret. I have seen an original letter from the widow of Ockley to the Earl of Oxford — in which she lays before him the deplorable situation of her affairs; the debts of the Professor being beyond what his effects amounted to, the severity of the creditors would not even suffer the executor to make the best of his effects; the widow remained destitute of necessaries, incapable of assisting her children *.

* The following are extracts from OCKLEY's letters to the Earl of Oxford, which I copy from the originals.

Thus students have devoted their days to studies worthy of a student. They are

"*Cambridge Castle, May* 2, 1717.

"I am here in the prison for debt, which must needs be an unavoidable consequence of the distractions in my family. I enjoy more repose, indeed, here, than I have tasted these many years, but the circumstances of a family oblige me to go out as soon as I can."

"*Cambridge, Sept.* 7, 1717.

"I have at last found leisure in my confinement to finish my Saracen history, which I might have hoped for in vain in my perplexed circumstances."

I shall insert here, as a convenient place, although the author was not an Orientalist, a letter written on a death-bed — the writer was the once witty and celebrated ROBERT GREENE, whose name has appeared before in these volumes. The letter was originally given by his adversary, Gabriel Harvey, and its authenticity has been idly disputed — but no critic who understands human nature, which ought to be the first canon of criticism, will ever deem this

public benefactors, yet find no friend in the public, who cannot yet appreciate their value — Ministers of state know it, though they have rarely protected them. OCKLEY, by letters I have seen, was frequently em-

letter a forgery — it is the most pathetic imaginable, and every word is stamped in the heat of the mint. GREENE died abandoned, in the utmost want, in an obscure lodging; he had deserted a good wife, but seems to have discovered a strong sense of repentance, sorrow, and honour — and this was the dying author's letter:

"Doll, I charge thee, by the love of our youth, and by my soul's rest, that thou wilt see this man paide; for if he and his wife had not succoured me, I had died in the streets. ROBERT GREENE."

I have seen, in the archives of the LITERARY FUND for distressed Authors, too many of such letters to suspect the authenticity of the present, which Harvey could never have forged, for it excites commiseration for one whom he seems heartily to have hated and feared.

ployed by Bolingbroke to translate letters from the Sovereign of Morocco to our Court; yet all the debts for which he was imprisoned in Cambridge Castle did not exceed two hundred pounds. The public interest is concerned in stimulating such enthusiasts; they are men who cannot be salaried, who cannot be created by letters patent; for they are men who infuse their soul into their studies, and breathe their fondness for them in their last agonies. Yet such are doomed to feel their life pass away like a painful dream!

DANGER INCURRED BY GIVING THE RESULT OF LITERARY ENQUIRIES.

It is only an Author who seems to occupy that critical situation, where, while he is presenting the world with the result of profound studies, he has also to perform the duties of an honest enquirer. By this he may incur the risk of offending the higher powers, and witnessing his own days embittered. Liable, by his moderation or his discoveries, by his scruples or his assertions, by his adherence to truth, or by the curiosity of his speculations, to be persecuted by two opposite parties, even when the accusations of the one necessarily nullify the other; such an author will be fortunate to be permit-

ted to retire out of the circle of the bad passions; but he crushes in silence and voluntary obscurity all future efforts — and thus the nation lose a valued author.

This case is exemplified by the history of Dr. Cowel's curious work "The Interpreter." The book itself is a treasure of our antiquities, illustrating our national manners. The author was devoted to his studies, and the merits of his work recommended him to the Archbishop of Canterbury; in the Ecclesiastical Court he practised as a Civilian, and had there proved himself as a Judge, eminent for his integrity as his learning.

Cowel gave his work with all the modesty of true learning; for who knows his deficiencies so well on the subject he has written, as that author who knows most? It is delightful to listen to the simplicity

and force with which an author in the reign of our first James, opens himself without reserve.

"My true end is the advancement of knowledge; and therefore have I published this poor work, not only to impart the good thereof to those young ones that want it, but also to draw from the learned the supply of my defects. Whosoever will charge these my travels (labours) with many over-sights, he shall need no solemn pains to prove them. And upon the view taken of this book sithence the impression, I dare assure them that shall observe most faults therein, that I, by gleaning after him, will gather as many omitted by him, as he shall shew committed by me. What a man saith well is not, however, to be rejected because he hath some errors; reprehend who will, in God's name, that is, with sweetness, and without reproach. So shall he reap hearty thanks

at my hands, and thus more soundly help in a few months, than I by tossing and tumbling my books at home, could possibly have done in many years."

This extract discovers COWEL's amiable character as an Author. But he was not fated to receive "sweetness without reproach."

COWEL encountered an unrelenting enemy in Sir Edward Coke, the famous Attorney General of James I. the Commentator of Littleton. As a man, his name ought to arouse our indignation, for his licentious tongue, his fierce brutality, and his cold and tasteless genius. He whose vileness could even ruffle the great spirit of Rawleigh, was the shameless persecutor of the learned COWEL.

Coke was the Oracle of the Common Law, and COWEL of the Civil; but Cowel

practised at Westminster Hall, as well as at Doctors Commons. Coke turned away, with hatred, from an advocate who, with the skill of a great lawyer, exerted all the courage. The Attorney General sought every occasion to degrade him, and, with puerile derision, attempted to fasten on Dr. Cowel the nick-name of *Dr. Cowheel.* Coke, after having written in his Reports whatever he could against our Author, with no effect, started a new project. Coke well knew his master's jealousy on the question of his Prerogative; and he touched the King on that nerve. The Attorney General suggested to James that Cowel had discussed "too nicely the mysteries of his monarchy, in some points derogatory to the supreme power of his Crown; asserting that the royal prerogative was in come cases limited." So subtly

the serpent whispered to the feminine ear of a monarch, whom this vanity of royalty startled with all the fears of a woman. This suggestion had nearly occasioned the ruin of COWEL—it verged on treason. And if the conspiracy of Coke against COWEL now failed, it was from the patronage of the Archbishop, who influenced the King; but it did not fail in alienating the royal favour.

When Coke found he could not hang COWEL for treason, it was only a small disappointment, for he had hopes to secure his prey by involving him in felony. As physicians in desperate cases sometimes reverse their mode of treatment, so Coke now operated on an opposite principle. He procured a party in the Commons, to declare that COWEL was a betrayer of the rights and liberties of the people; that he

had asserted the King was independent of Parliament, and that it was a favour to admit the consent of his subjects in giving of subsidies, &c.; and, in a word, that he drew his arguments from the Roman Imperial Code, and would make the laws and customs of Rome and Constantinople, those of London and York. Passages were wrested to Coke's design. The Prefacer of Cowel's book very happily expresses himself when he says, "When a suspected book is brought to the torture, it often confesseth all, and more than it knows."

The Commons proceeded criminally against Cowel; and it is said his life was required, had not the King interposed. The author was imprisoned, and the book was burnt.

On this occasion was issued "a proclamation, touching Dr. Cowel's book, called

The Interpreter." It may be classed among the most curious documents of our literary history. I do not hesitate to consider this proclamation as the composition of James I; and from a late examination of his works, let me also protest against the echoed opinions of so many critics; I would plead for the talents of this literary monarch. James was no more a pedant than the ablest of his contemporaries; nor abhorred more the taste of tobacco, nor feared old witches, than they did; he was a great wit, a most acute disputant; and he discovers a genius far above mediocrity in his excellent *Basilicon Doron*. He would have been a Sage for a Prince, for his genius went beyond pedantry. Marcus Antoninus was not a greater philosopher, though he was as feeble a Sovereign. James had formed the most elevated conception of

the virtues and duties of a Monarch ; and had his son Henry survived, that nobler genius had embodied the ideal of his father and his preceptor.

I will preserve some passages from this proclamation, not merely for their majestic composition, which may still be admired, and the singularity of the ideas, which may still be applied — but for the literary event to which it gave birth, in the appointment of a royal licenser for the press. — Proclamations and burning of books, are the weak effort of a strong government, exciting rather than suppressing public attention.

" This later age and times of the world wherein we are fallen, is so much given to verbal profession, as well of Religion, as of all commendable royal virtues, but wanting the actions and deeds agreeable to so specious

a profession; as it hath bred such an unsatiable curiosity in many men's spirits, and such an itching in the tongues and pens of most men, as nothing is left unsearched to the bottom, both in talking and writing. For, from the very highest mysteries in the Godhead, and the most inscrutable counsels in the Trinity, to the very lowest pit of Hell, and the confused actions of the Devils there, there is nothing now unsearched into by the curiosity of men's brains. Men, not being contented with the knowledge of so much of the will of God as it hath pleased him to reveal; but they will needs sit with him in his most private closet, and become privy of his most inscrutable counsels. And, therefore, it is no wonder that men, in these our days, do not spare to wade in all the deepest mysteries that belong to the persons or state of Kings and Princes, that are Gods upon earth; since we see (as we have already said) that they spare not God

himself. And this licence, which every talker or writer now assumeth to himself, is come to this abuse; that many Phormios will give counsel to Hannibal, and many men that never went of the compass of cloysters or colleges, will freely wade, by their writings, in the deepest mysteries of monarchy and politick government. Whereupon it cannot otherwise fall out, but that when men go out of their element, and meddle with things above their capacity, themselves shall not only go astray and stumble in darkness, but will mislead also divers others with themselves into many mistakings and errors; the proof whereof we have lately had by a book written by Dr. Cowel, called The Interpreter."

The royal reviewer then in a summary way shows how COWEL had, "by meddling in matters beyond his reach, fallen into many things to mistake and deceive himself." The book is therefore "prohibited;

the buying, uttering, or reading it;" and those " who have any copies are to deliver the same presently upon this publication to the Mayor of London, &c." and the proclamation concludes with instituting licencers of the press:

" Because that there shall be better oversight of books of all sorts before they come to the press, we have resolved to make choice of commissioners that shall look more narrowly into the nature of all those things that shall be put to the press, and from whom a more strict account shall be yielded unto us, than hath been used heretofore."

What were the feelings of our injured author, whose integrity was so firm, and whose love of study was so warm, when he reaped for his reward, the displeasure of his sovereign, and the indignation of his countrymen — accused at once, of contra-

dictory crimes; he could not be a betrayer of the rights of the people, and at the same time limit the sovereign power. COWEL retreated to his college, and, like a wise man, abstained from the press; he pursued his private studies, while his innoffensive life was a comment on Coke's inhumanity, more honourable to COWEL than any of Coke's on Littleton.

Thus COWEL saw, in his own life, its richest labour thrown aside — and when the author and his adversary were no more, it became a treasure valued by posterity! It was printed in the reign of Charles I. under the administration of Cromwell, and again after the Restoration. It received the honour of a foreign edition. Its value is still permanent. Such is the history of a book, which occasioned the disgrace of its author, and embittered his life.

A similar calamity was the fate of honest STOWE, the Chronicler. After a long life of labour, and having exhausted his patrimony in the study of English Antiquities, from a reverential love to his country, poor STOWE was ridiculed, calumniated, neglected, and persecuted. One cannot read without indignation and pity what Howes, his continuator, tells us in his dedication. Howes had observed that

"No man would lend a helping hand to the late aged painful Chronicler, nor, after his death, prosecute his work. He applied himself to several persons of dignity and learning, whose names had got forth among the public as likely to be the continuators of Stowe; but every one persisted in denying this, and some imagined that their secret enemies had mentioned their names with a view

of injuring them, by incurring the displeasure of their superiors, and risking their own quiet. One said, 'I will *not flatter*, to scandalise my posterity;' another, 'I cannot see how a man should spend his labour and money worse than in that which acquires no regard nor reward except *back-biting* and *detraction*.' One swore a great oath, and said, 'I thank God that I am not yet so mad to waste my time, spend two hundred pounds a year, trouble myself and all my friends, only to give assurance of endless reproach, loss of liberty, and bring all my days in question."

Unhappy authors! are such then the terrors which silence eloquence, and such the dangers which environ truth? I have myself witnessed in several instances, a tale told the public, where the truth is guardedly suppressed, and yet the tale is voluminous enough! Posterity has many

discoveries to make, or many deceptions to endure! But we are treading on hot embers.

Such too was the fate of REGINALD SCOT, who, in an elaborate and curious volume*, if he could not stop the torrent of the popular superstitions of witchcraft, was the first, at least, to break and scatter the waves. It is a work which forms an epoch in the history of the human mind in our country; but the author had antici-

* The Discoverie of Witchcraft, "necessary to be known for the undeceiving of Judges, Justices, and Juries, and for the preservation of Poor People. Third edition, 1665." This was about the time that, according to Arnot's Scots Trials, the expences of burning a witch amounted to ninety-two pounds fourteen shillings, Scots. This unfortunate old woman cost two trees, and employed two men to watch her closely for thirty days! One ought to recollect the past follies of humanity, to detect, perhaps, some existing ones.

pated a very remote period of its enlargement. Scot, the apostle of humanity, and the legislator of reason, lived in retirement, yet persecuted by religious credulity, and legal cruelty.

Selden, perhaps the most learned of our antiquaries, was often led, in his curious investigations, to disturb his own peace, by giving the result of his enquiries. James I. and the Court-party were willing enough to extol his profound authorities and reasonings, on topics which did not interfere with their system of arbitrary power; but they harassed and persecuted the author whom they would at other times eagerly quote as their advocate. Selden, in his "History of Tithes," had alarmed the Clergy by the intricacy of his enquiries. He pretends, however, to have only collected the opposite opinions of others, without delivering

his own. The book was not only suppressed, but the great author was further disgraced by subscribing a gross recantation of all his learned investigations—and was compelled to receive in silence, the insults of courtly scholars, who had the hardihood to accuse him of plagiarism, and other literary treasons, which more sensibly hurt SELDEN than the recantation extorted from his hand by "the Lords of the High Commission Court." James I. would not suffer him to reply to them.—When the King desired SELDEN to shew the right of the British Crown to the dominion of the sea, this learned Author having made proper collections; SELDEN, angried at an imprisonment he had undergone, refused to publish the work. A great Author like SELDEN degrades himself when any personal feeling, in literary

disputes, places him on an equality with any King; the duty was to his country.—But SELDEN, alive to the call of rival genius, when Grotius published, in Holland, his *Mare liberum*, gave the world his *Mare clausum;* when SELDEN had to encounter Grotius, and to proclaim to the universe "the Sovereignty of the Seas," how contemptible to him appeared the mean persecutions of a crowned head, and how little his own meaner resentment!

To this subject, the fate of Dr. HAWKESWORTH is somewhat allied. It is well known that this author, having distinguished himself by his pleasing compositions in the Adventurer, was chosen to draw up the narrative of Cook's discoveries in the South Seas; from the elegant moralist, whose fictions had charmed by the most beautiful imagination, the pictures

of a new world, the description of new manners in an original state of society, and the incidents arising from an adventure which could find no parallel, in the annals of mankind, but under the solitary genius of Columbus — all these were conceived to offer a history, to which the moral and contemplative powers of HAWKESWORTH only were equal. Our author's fate, and that of his work, are known:—he incurred all the danger of giving the result of his enquiries; he indulged his imagination till it burst into pruriency, and discussed moral theorems, till he ceased to be moral. The shock it gave to the feelings of our author, was fatal — and the error of a mind, intent on enquiries which, perhaps, he thought innocent, and which the world condemned as criminal, terminated in death itself. HAWKESWORTH was a vain man,

and proud of having raised himself by his literary talents from his native obscurity; of no learning, he drew all his science from the Cyclopædia; and, I have heard, could not always have construed the Latin mottos of his own paper, which were furnished by Johnson; but his sensibility was abundant — and ere his work was given to the world, he felt those tremblings, and those doubts, which anticipated his fate. That he was in a state of mental agony, respecting the reception of his opinions, and some other parts of his work, will, I think, be discovered in the following letter, hitherto unpublished. It was addressed, with his MSS. to a Peer, to be examined before they were sent to the press — an occupation probably rather too serious for the noble critic.

"*London, March* 2, 1761.

"I think myself happy to be permitted to put *my MSS. into your Lordship's hands*, because, though it increases my anxiety and my fears, yet it will at least secure me from what I should think *a far greater misfortune* than any other that can attend my performance; *the danger of addressing to the king any sentiment, allusion, or opinion*, that could make such an address *improper*.—I have now the honour to submit the *work* to your Lordship, with the dedication; from which the duty I owe to his Majesty, and, if I may be permitted to add any thing to that, the duty I owe to myself, have concurred to exclude the servile, extravagant, and indiscriminate adulation, which has so often disgraced alike those by whom it has been given and received. I remain, &c. &c."

This elegant epistle justly describes that delicacy in style, which has been so rarely

practised by an indiscriminate dedicator — but in respect to the MSS. themselves, not less feelingly touches on the " far greater misfortune than any other, of addressing sentiments, allusions, and opinions" — which were addressed, and overwhelmed the fortitude and intellect of this unhappy author!

A NATIONAL WORK
WHICH COULD FIND NO PATRONAGE.

THE author who is now before us is DE LOLME!

I shall consider the foreign author, who flew to our country as the asylum of Europe, who composed a noble work on our Constitution, and, having imbibed its spirit, acquired even the language of a free country, as an English author.

I do not know an example in our literary history that so loudly accuses our tardy and phlegmatic feeling respecting authors, as the treatment DE LOLME experienced in this country. His book on our constitution still enters into the studies of an English patriot, and is not the worse for

flattering and elevating the imagination, painting every thing beautiful, to encourage our love as well as our reverence for the most perfect system of governments.—It was a noble as well as ingenious effort in a foreigner—it claimed national attention—but could not obtain even individual patronage. The fact is mortifying to record, that the author who wanted every aid, received less encouragement than if he had solicited subscriptions for a raving novel, or an idle poem.—De Lolme was compelled to traffick with booksellers for this work; and, as he was a theoretical rather than a practical politician, he was a bad trader, and acquired the smallest remuneration. He lived, in the country to which he had rendered a national service, in extreme obscurity and decay; and the walls of the Fleet too often enclosed the

English Montesquieu. He never appears to have received a solitary attention*, and became so disgusted with authorship, that he preferred silently to endure its poverty, rather than its other vexations. He ceased almost to write. Of De Lolme I have heard little recorded, but his high-mindedness; a strong sense that he stood degraded beneath that rank in society which his book entitled him to enjoy. The cloud of poverty that covered him, only veiled without concealing its object; with the manners and dress of a decayed gentleman, he still shewed the few who met him, that he cherished a spirit perpetually at variance with the adversity of his circumstances.

* Except from the hand of literary charity; he was more than once relieved by the Literary Fund. Such are the authors only whom it is wise to patronise.

Our author, in a narrative prefixed to his work, is the proud historian of his own injured feelings; he smiled in bitterness on his contemporaries, confident it was a tale reserved for posterity.

After having written the work whose systematic principles refuted those political notions which prevailed at the æra of the American Revolution, — and whose truth has been so fatally demonstrated in our own times, in two great revolutions, which have shewn all the defects and all the mischief of nations rushing into a state of freedom, before they are worthy of it — the author candidly acknowledges he counted on some sort of encouragement, and little expected to find the mere publication had drawn him into great inconvenience.

"When my enlarged English edition was ready for the press, had I acquainted Ministers that I was preparing to boil my tea-kettle with it, for want of being able to afford the expences of printing it;" Ministers, it seems, would not have considered that he was lighting his fire with "myrrh, and cassia, and precious ointment."

In defect of encouragement from great men, and even from Booksellers, DE LOLME had recourse to a Subscription; and, by the manner he was received, and the indignities he endured, all which are narrated with great simplicity, it shewed that whatever his knowledge of our Constitution might be, "his knowledge of the country was, at that time, very incomplete." At length, when he shared the profits of his work with the Booksellers, these were "but

scanty and slow." After all, our author sarcastically, in congratulating himself, seems pleased that, however, he

"Was allowed to carry on the above business of selling my book, without any objection being formed against me, from my not having served a regular apprenticeship, and without being molested by the Inquisition."

And further he adds,

"Several authors have chosen to relate, in writings published after death, the personal advantages by which their performances had been followed; as for me, I have thought otherwise — and to see it printed while I am yet living."

This, indeed, is the language of irritation! and De Lolme degrades himself in the loudness of his complaint. But if the philosopher lost his temper, that misfortune will not, however, take away the

dishonour of the occasion that produced it. The country's shame is not lessened because that author who had raised its glory throughout Europe, and instructed the nation in its best lesson, grew indignant at the ingratitude of his pupil. DE LOLME ought not to have congratulated himself that he had been allowed the liberty of the press unharassed by an Inquisition—this sarcasm is senseless! or his book is a mere fiction!

THE MISERIES
OF SUCCESSFUL AUTHORS.

HUME is an Author so celebrated, a philosopher so serene, and a man so extremely amiable, if not fortunate, that we may be surprised to meet his name inscribed in a catalogue of Literary Calamities. Look into his literary life, and you will discover that the greater portion was mortified and angried; and that the stoic so lost his temper, that had not circumstances intervened which did not depend on himself, HUME had abandoned his country, and changed his name!

"The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity." His "Treatise of Human

Nature" fell, dead-born, from the press. It was cast anew, with another title, and was at first little more successful. His own favourite "Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals" came unnoticed and unobserved in the world. When he published the first portion of his "History," which made even Hume himself sanguine in his expectations,—he tells his own tale.

"I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and, as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment! All classes of men and readers united in their rage against him who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford." "What was

still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion, and in a twelvemonth not more than 45 copies were sold."

Even HUME, a stoic hitherto in his literary character, was struck down, and dismayed—he lost all courage to proceed—and, had the war not prevented him, "he had resolved to change his name, and never more to have returned to his native country."

But an Author, though born to suffer martyrdom, does not always expire; he may be flayed like St. Bartholomew, and yet he can breathe without a skin; stoned, like St. Stephen, and yet write on with a broken head; and he has been even known to survive the flames, notwithstanding the most precious part of an Author, which is obviously his book, has been burnt in an *Auto da fe*. HUME once

more tried the press in "The Natural History of Religion." It proved but another martyrdom! Still was the *fall* (as he terms it) of the first volume of his History haunting his nervous imagination, when he found himself yet strong enough to hold a pen in his hand, and ventured to produce a second, which "helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother." But the third part, containing the reign of Elizabeth, was particularly obnoxious, and he was doubtful whether he was again to be led to the stake. But HUME, a little hardened by a little success, grew, to use his own words, "callous against the impressions of public folly," and completed his History, which was now received "with tolerable, and but tolerable success."

At length, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, our Author began, a year or two before he died, as he writes, to see "many *symptoms* of my literary reputation, breaking out *at last* with additional lustre, though I know that I can have but few years to enjoy it." What a provoking consolation for a philosopher, who, according to the result of his own system, was close upon a state of annihilation!

To HUME let us add the illustrious name of DRYDEN.

It was after preparing a second edition of Virgil, that the great DRYDEN, who had lived, and was to die in harness, found himself still obliged to seek for daily bread. Scarcely relieved from one heavy task, he was compelled to hasten to another; and his efforts were now stimulated by a domestic feeling; the expected return of

his Son in ill-health from Rome. In a letter to his bookseller he pathetically writes, "if it please God that *I must die of over-study*, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his." It was on this occasion, on the verge of his seventieth year, as he describes himself in the dedication of his Virgil, that, "worn out with study, and oppressed with fortune," he contracted to supply the bookseller with 10,000 verses at sixpence a line!

What was his entire dramatic life, but a series of vexation and hostility, from his first play to his last? On those very boards whence DRYDEN was to have derived the means of his existence and his fame, he saw his foibles aggravated, and his morals aspersed. Overwhelmed by the keen ridicule of Buckingham, and maliciously mortified by the triumph which Settle,

his meanest rival, was allowed to obtain over him — still to encounter the cool malignant eye of Langbaine, who read poetry only to detect plagiarism. Contemporary genius is inspected with too much familiarity to be felt with reverence; and the angry prefaces of DRYDEN only excited the little revenge of the wits. How could such sympathise with injured, but with lofty feelings? They spread two reports of him, which may not be true, but which hurt him with the public. It was said that, being jealous of the success of Creech, for his version of Lucretius, he advised him to attempt Horace, in which Dryden knew he would fail — and a contemporary haunter of the theatre, in a curious letter * on "The Winter Diversions," says of Con-

* A letter found among the papers of the late Mr Windham, which Mr. Malone has preserved..

greve's angry Preface to the Double Dealer, that,

"The critics were severe upon this play, which gave the author occasion to lash them in his epistle dedicatory — so that 'tis generally thought *he has done his business, and lost himself;* a thing he owes to Mr. Dryden's *treacherous friendship,* who, being *jealous of the applause* he had got by his Old Bachelor, *deluded him* into a foolish imitation of his own way of writing angry prefaces."

This lively critic is still more vivacious on the great DRYDEN — who had then produced his "Love Triumphant," which, the critic says,

"Was damned by the universal cry of the town, *nemine contradicente* but the *conceited poet.* He says in his prologue, that 'this is the last the town must expect from him: he had done himself a kindness had he taken his leave

before." He then describes the success of Southerne's Fatal Marriage, or the Innocent Adultery; and concludes, "This kind usage will encourage desponding minor poets, and *vex huffing Dryden and Congreve to madness.*"

I have quoted thus much of this letter, that we may have before us a true image of those feelings which contemporaries entertain of the greater geniuses of their age; how they seek to level them; and in what manner men of genius are doomed to be treated — slighted, starved, and abused. DRYDEN and CONGREVE! the one the finest genius, the other the most exquisite wit of our nation, are to be *vexed to madness!* — their failures are not to excite sympathy, but contempt or ridicule! How the feelings and the language of contemporaries differ from that of posterity! And yet let *us* not exult in our purer and

more dignified feelings — *we* are, indeed, the *posterity* of Dryden and Congreve; but we are the *contemporaries* of others who must patiently hope for better treatment from our sons than they have received from the fathers.

Dryden was no master of the pathetic— yet never were compositions more pathetic than the Prefaces this great man has transmitted to posterity! Opening all the feelings of his heart, we live among his domestic sorrows. Johnson censures Dryden for saying *he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen* *. We have just seen that Hume

* There is an affecting *remonstrance* of Dryden to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, on the state of his poverty and neglect — in which is this remarkable passage: "It is enough for one age to have *neglected* Mr. Cowley, and *starved* Mr. Butler."

went farther, and sighed to fly to a retreat beyond that country which knew not to reward genius. — What, if DRYDEN felt the dignity of that character he supported, dare we blame his frankness? If the age be ungenerous, shall contemporaries escape the scourge of the great author, who feels he is addressing another age more favourable to him?

JOHNSON, too, notices his "Self-commendation; his diligence in reminding the world of his merits, and expressing, with very little scruple, his high opinion of his own powers." DRYDEN shall answer in his own words; with all the simplicity of Montaigne, he expresses himself with the dignity that would have become MILTON or GRAY:

"It is a vanity common to all writers to overvalue their own productions; and it is better

for me to own this failing in myself, than the world to do it for me. *For what other reason have I spent my life in such an unprofitable study? Why am I grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame?* The same parts and application which have made me a POET, might have raised me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning, and less honesty, than myself."

How feelingly Whitehead paints the situation of DRYDEN in his old age: —

"Yet lives the man, how wild soe'er his aim,
Would madly barter Fortune's smiles for Fame?
Well pleas'd to shine, through each recording page,
The hapless DRYDEN of a shameless age!

"Ill-fated Bard! where'er thy name appears,
The weeping verse a sad memento bears;
Ah! what avail'd the enormous blaze between
Thy dawn of glory and thy closing scene!

When sinking Nature asks our kind repairs,
Unstrung the nerves, and silver'd o'er the hairs;
When stay'd Reflection came uncall'd at last,
And grey Experience counts each folly past!"

MICKLE'S version of the Lusiad offers an affecting instance of the melancholy fears which often accompany the progress of works of magnitude, undertaken by men of genius. Five years he had buried himself in a farm-house, devoted to the solitary labour; and he closes his preface with the fragment of a poem, whose stanzas have perpetuated all the tremblings and the emotions, whose unhappy influence the author had experienced through the long work. Thus pathetically he addresses the Muse —

" —Well thy meed repays thy worthless toil;
Upon thy houseless head pale Want descends

In bitter shower; and taunting Scorn still rends
And wakes thee trembling from thy golden
dream:
In vetchy bed, or loathly dungeon ends
Thy idled life ——'

And when, at length, the great and anxious labour was completed, the author was still more unhappy than under the former influence of his foreboding terrors. The work is dedicated to the Duke of Buccleugh. Whether his Grace had been prejudiced against the poetical labour, by Adam Smith, who had as little comprehension of the nature of poetry as becomes a political economist, or from whatever cause, after possessing it for six weeks, the Duke had never condescended to open the volume. It is to the honour of MICKLE that the Dedication is a simple respectful inscription, in which the Poet had not compromised

his dignity—and that in the second edition he had the magnanimity of not withdrawing the dedication to this statue-like patron. Neither was the critical reception of this splendid labour of five devoted years, grateful to the sensibility of the author: he writes to a friend,

"Though my work is well received at Oxford, I will honestly own to you, some things have hurt me. A few grammatical slips in the introduction have been mentioned; and some things in the notes about Virgil, Milton, and Homer, have been called the arrogance of criticism. But the greatest offence of all is what I say of Blank verse."

He was, indeed, after this great work was given to the public, as unhappy as at any preceding period of his life; and MICKLE too, like HUME and DRYDEN, could feel a wish to forsake his native

land! He still found his "head houseless;" and "the vetchy bed" and "loathly dungeon" still haunted his dreams. "To write for the Booksellers, is what I never will do," exclaimed this man of genius, though struck by poverty. He projected an edition of his own poems by subscription.

"Desirous of giving an edition of my works, in which I shall bestow the utmost attention, which, perhaps, will be my final farewell to that blighted spot (worse than the most bleak mountains of Scotland) yclept Parnassus; after this labour is finished, if Governor Johnstone cannot or does not help me to a little independence, *I will certainly bid adieu to Europe, to unhappy suspense, and perhaps also to the chagrin of soul which I feel to accompany it.*"

Such was the language which cannot

now be read without exciting our sympathy for the Author of the version of an epic, which, after a solemn devotion of no small portion of the most valuable years of life, had been presented to the world, with not sufficient remuneration or notice of the Author, to create even Hope in the sanguine temperament of a Poet. MICKLE was more honoured at Lisbon than in his own country. So imperceptible are the gradations of public favour to the feelings of genius, and so vast an interval separates that Author, who does not immediately address the tastes or the fashions of his age, from the reward or the enjoyment of his studies.

Shall we account, among the lesser Calamities of Literature, that of a man of genius dedicating his days to the composition of a voluminous and national work,

and when that labour is accomplished, the hope of fame, perhaps other hopes as necessary to reward past toil, and open to future enterprize, are all annihilated, or the unfinished work interrupted — on its publication? Yet this work neglected, or not relished, perhaps even the sport of witlings, afterwards is placed among the treasures of our language, when the Author is no more! but what is posthumous gratitude, could it reach even the ear of an angel?

The calamity is unavoidable; but this circumstance does not lessen it. New works must for a time be submitted to popular favour; but posterity is the inheritance of genius. The man of genius, however, who has composed this great work, calculates his vigils, is best acquainted with its merits, and is not

without an anticipation of the future feeling of his country; he

"But weeps the more, because he weeps in vain."

Such is the fate which has awaited on many great works; and the heart of genius has died away on its own labours. I need not go so far back as the Elizabethan age to illustrate a calamity which will excite the sympathy of every man of letters; but the great work of a man of no ordinary genius presents itself on this occassion.

This great work is "The Polyolbion" of MICHAEL DRAYTON; a poem unrivalled for its magnitude and its character. The genealogy of poetry is always suspicious; yet I think it owed its birth to LELAND'S magnificent view of his intended work on Britain, and was probably nourished by the "Britannia" of CAMDEN, who inhe-

rited the mighty industry, without the poetical spirit, of Leland; DRAYTON embraced both. This singular combination of topographical erudition and poetical fancy, constitutes a national work—an union that some may conceive not fortunate, no more than "the slow length" of its Alexandrine metre, for the purposes of mere delight. Yet what theme can be more elevating than a bard chaunting to his "Father-land;" as the Hollanders called their country? Our tales of ancient glory, our worthies who must not die, our towns, our rivers, and our mountains, all glancing before the picturesque eye of the Naturalist and the Poet. It is, indeed, a labour of Hercules; but it was not unaccompanied by the lyre of Apollo.

This national work was ill received; and the great author dejected, never par-

doned his contemporaries, and even lost his temper. DRAYTON and his poetical friends beheld indignantly the trifles of the hour overpowering the neglected Polyolbion.

One poet tells us that

"———————— they prefer
The fawning lines of every pamphleter:"

GEO. WITHERS.

And a contemporary, records the utter neglect of this great Poet:

"Why lives DRAYTON, when the times refuse
Both means to live, and matter for a Muse,
Only without excuse to leave us quite,
Aud tell us, durst we act, he durst to write."

W. BROWNE.

DRAYTON published his Polyolbion first in eighteen parts; and the second portion afterwards. In this interval we have a letter to Drummond, dated in 1619.

" I thank you, my dear sweet Drummond, for your good opinion of Polyolbion. I have done twelve books more, that is, from the 18th book, which was Kent (if you note it), all the East parts and North to the river of Tweed; *but it lieth by me, for the booksellers and I are in terms:* they are a company of base knaves, whom I scorn and kick at."

The vengeance of the Poet had been more justly wreaked on the buyers of books, than on the sellers, who, though knavery has a strong connection with trade, yet, were they knaves, they would be true to their own interests. Far from impeding a successful author, booksellers are apt to hurry his labours; for they prefer the crude to the mature fruit, whenever the public taste can be appeased even by an unripened dessert.

These "knaves," however, seem to have succeeded in forcing poor DRAYTON to observe an abstinence from the press, which must have convulsed all the feelings of authorship. The second part was not published till three years after this letter was written; and then without maps. Its preface is remarkable enough; it is pathetic, till Drayton loses the dignity of genius, in its asperity. It is inscribed in no good humour:

"TO ANY THAT WILL READ IT!

"When I first undertook this poem, or, as some have pleased to term it, this Herculean labour, I was by some virtuous friends persuaded that I should receive much comfort and encouragement; and for these reasons: First, it was a new clear way, never before gone by any; that it contained all the delicacies, delights, and rarities of this re-

nowned isle, interwoven with the histories of the Britains, Saxons, Normans, and the later English. And further, that there is scarcely any of the nobility or gentry of this land, but that he is some way or other interested therein.

"But it hath fallen out otherwise; for instead of that comfort which my noble friends proposed as my due, I have met with barbarous ignorance, and base detraction; such a cloud hath the devil drawn over the world's judgment. Some of the stationers that had the selling of the first part of this poem, because *it went not so fast away in the selling* as some of their beastly and abominable trash (a shame both to our language and our nation), have despightfully left out the epistles to the readers, and so have cousened the buyers with imperfected books, which those that have undertaken the second part have been forced to

amend in the first, for *the small number that are yet remaining in their hands.*

" And some of our outlandish, unnatural English (I know not how otherwise to express them) stick not to say that there is nothing in this island worthy studying for, and take a great pride to be ignorant in any thing thereof. — As for these cattle, *odi profanum vulgus, et arceo ;* of which I account them, be they never so great."

Yet, as a true Poet, whose impulse, like fate, overturns all opposition, DRAYTON is not to be thrown out of his avocation ; but intrepidly closes, by promising " they shall not deter me from going on with Scotland, if means and time do not hinder me to perform as much as I have promised in my first song." Who could have imagined that such bitterness of style, and such angry emotions, could have been

raised in the breast of a Poet of pastoral elegance and fancy.

" Whose bounding Muse o'er ev'ry mountain rode,
And every river warbled as it flow'd."

KIRKPATRICK.

It is melancholy to reflect that some of the greatest works in our language have involved their authors in distress and anxiety — and that many have gone down to their grave insensible of that glory which soon covered it.

THE ILLUSIONS

OF WRITERS IN VERSE.

Who would, with the awful severity of Plato, banish Poets from the Republic? But it may be desirable that the Republic should not be banished from Poets, which it usually is when an inordinate passion for writing verses is indulged to a monstrous excess. There is no greater enemy to domestic quiet, than confirmed versifiers; yet are most of them much to be pitied: it is the *mediocre* critics they first meet with, who are the real origin of a populace of *mediocre* Poets. A young writer of verses is sure to get flattered by those who affect to admire what they do not even understand, and by those who, be-

cause they understand, imagine they are likewise endowed with delicacy of taste and a critical judgment. What sacrifices of social enjoyments, and all the business of life, are lavished with a prodigal's ruin in an employment, which will be usually discovered to be a source of early anxiety, and of late disappointment*! I say no-

* An elegant Poet of our times alludes, with due feeling, to these personal sacrifices. Addressing Poetry, he exclaims,

"—In devotion to thy heavenly charms,
I clasp'd thy altar with my infant arms;
For thee neglected the wide field of wealth,
The toils of interest, and the sports of health."

How often may we lament that Poets are too apt "to clasp the altar with infant arms." GOLDSMITH was near forty when he published his popular poems —and most of the most valued poems were produced in mature life. When the Poet begins in "Infancy," he too often contracts a habit of writing verses, and sometimes, in all his life, never reaches poetry.

thing of the ridicule in which it involves some wretched Mævius, but of the misery that falls so heavily on him, and is often entailed on his generation. Whitehead has versified an admirable reflection of Pope's in the preface to his works.

" For wanting wit be totally undone,
And barr'd all arts, for having fail'd in one?"

The great mind of BLACKSTONE never shewed him more a poet than when he took, not without affection, " a farewell of the Muse," on his being called to the Bar. DRUMMOND, of Hawthornden, quitted the Bar from his love of poetry; yet he seems to have lamented slighting the profession which his father wished him to pursue. — He perceives his error, he feels even contrition, but still cherishes it; no man, not in his senses, ever had a more lucid interval:

" I changed countries, new delights to find ;
But ah ! for pleasure I did find new pain ;
Enchanting Pleasure so did Reason blind,
That Father's love and words I scorn'd as vain.
I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
With toil of spirit which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds of few or none are sought,
That there is nothing lighter than vain praise ;
Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
But that, alas! I both must write and love!"

Thus, like all poets, who, as Goldsmith observes, " are fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future," he talks like a man of sense, and acts like a fool.

This wonderful susceptibility of praise, to which Poets seem more liable than any other class of authors, is, indeed, their common food ; and they could not keep

life in them without this nourishment. NAT. LEE, a true poet in all the excesses of poetical feelings, for he was in such raptures at times as to lose his senses, expresses himself in very energetic language, on the effects of the praise necessary for Poets:

"Praise," says LEE, "is the greatest encouragement we cameleons can pretend to, or rather the manna that keeps soul and body together; we devour it as if it were angels' food, and vainly think we grow immortal. There is nothing transports a Poet, next to love, like commending in the right place."

This, no doubt, is a rare enjoyment; and serves to strengthen his illusions. But the same fervid genius elsewhere confesses, when reproached for his ungoverned fancy, that it brings with itself its own punishment:

"I cannot be," says this great and unfortunate Poet, "so ridiculous a creature to any man as I am to myself; for who should know the house so well as the good man at home? who, when his neighbour comes to see him, still sets the best rooms to view, and, if he be not a wilful ass, keeps the rubbish and lumber in some dark hole, where nobody comes but himself, to mortify at melancholy hours."

Study the admirable preface of POPE, composed at that matured period of life, when the fever of fame had passed away, and experience had corrected fancy. It is a calm statement between authors and readers — there is no imagination that colours by a single metaphor, or conceals the real feeling which moved the author on that solemn occasion, of collecting his works for the last time. It is on a full

review of the past that this great Poet delivers this remarkable sentence:

"*I believe, if any one, early in his life, should contemplate the dangerous fate of* AUTHORS, *he would scarce be of their number on any consideration.* The life of a wit is a warfare upon earth; and to pretend to serve the learned world in any way, one must have the constancy of a martyr, and a resolution to suffer for its sake."

All this is so true in literary history, that he who affects to suspect the sincerity of Pope's declaration, may flatter his sagacity, but will do no credit to his knowledge. I have, in the article COWLEY *, given the solemn confession of "one who spent his time in poetry," and would not willingly have "a son commit the same folly."

* Vol. I. p. 98.

If thus great Poets pour their lamentations for having devoted themselves to their art, some sympathy is due to the querulousness of a numerous race of *provincial Bards,* whose situation is ever at variance with their feelings. These usually form exaggerated conceptions of their own genius, from the habit of comparing themselves with their contracted circle. Restless, with a desire of poetical celebrity, their heated imagination views in the metropolis that fame and fortune denied them in their native town; there they become half-hermits and half-philosophers, darting epigrams which provoke hatred, or pouring elegies, descriptive of their feelings, which move derision: their neighbours find it much easier to ascertain their foibles, than comprehend their genius; and both parties live in a state of mutual

persecution. Such, among many, was the fate of the Poet HERRICK; his vein was pastoral, and he lived in the elysium of the West, which, however, he describes by the sullen epithet, "Dull Devonshire," where "he is still sad." Strange that such a Poet should have resided near twenty years in one of our most beautiful counties in a very discontented humour. When he quitted his village of "Deanbourne," the petulant poet left behind him a severe "farewell," which, Mr. Nichols says, was found still preserved in the parish, after a lapse of more than a century. Local satire has been often preserved by the very objects it is directed against, sometimes from the charm of the wit itself, and sometimes from the covert malice of attacking our neighbours. Thus he addresses "Deanbourne, a rude river in De-

vonshire, by which, sometime, he lived:"

" Dean-bourn, farewell!
Thy rockie bottom that doth tear thy streams,
And makes them frantic, e'en to all extremes!
Rockie thou art, and rockie we discover
Thy men,—
O men! O manners!—
O people currish, churlish as their seas—"

He rejoices he leaves them, never to return till " rocks shall turn to rivers." When he arrives in London,

" From the dull confines of the drooping West,
To see the day-spring from the pregnant East,"

he, " ravished in spirit," exclaims, on a view of the metropolis,

" O place! O people! manners form'd to please
All nations, customs, kindreds, languages!"

But he fervently intreats not to be banished again:

" For, rather than I'll to the West return,
I'll beg of thee first, here to have mine urn."

The Devonians were avenged; for the Satirist of the *English Arcadia* was condemned again to reside by " its rockie side," among " its rockie men."

Such has been the usual chaunt of provincial poets; and, if the " silky-soft Favonian gales" of Devon, with its " Worthies," could not escape the anger of such a Poet as Herrick, what county may hope to be saved from the invective of querulous and dissatisfied Poets?

In this calamity of authors I will shew that a great Poet felicitated himself that poetry was not the business of his life; and afterwards I will bring forward an evidence that the immoderate pursuit of poetry, with a very moderate genius, creates a perpetual state of illusion; and pursues

gray-headed folly even to the verge of the grave.

Some of our Poets have exulted that they never made Poetry the sole employment of their lives.

Pope imagined that PRIOR was only fit to make verses, and less qualified for business than Addison himself. Had PRIOR lived to finish that history of his own times he was writing, we should have seen how far the opinion of Pope was right. PRIOR abandoned the Whigs, who had been his first patrons, for the Tories, who were now willing to adopt the political apostate. This versatility for place and pension rather shews that PRIOR was a little more "qualified for business than Addison."

Johnson tells us "PRIOR lived at a time when the rage of party detected all,

which was any man's interest to hide; and, as little ill is heard of Prior, it is certain that not much was known:" more, however, than Johnson supposes. This great man came to the pleasing task of his poetical biography totally unprepared, except with the maturity of his genius, as a profound observer of man, and an invincible dogmatist in taste. In the history of the times, Johnson is deficient, which has deprived us of that permanent instruction and delight his intellectual powers had poured around it. The character and the secret history of PRIOR are laid open in the State-poems*; a bitter Whiggish narrative, too particular to be entirely fictitious, while it throws a new light on Johnson's observation of Prior's "propensity to sordid converse, and the low delights of mean

* Vol. II. p. 355.

company," which Johnson had imperfectly learnt from some attendant on Prior.

" A vintner's boy, the wretch was first preferr'd
To wait at Vice's gates, and pimp for bread;
To hold the candle, and sometimes the door,
Let in the drunkard, and let out ————.
But, as to villains it has often chanc'd,
Was for his wit and wickedness advanc'd.
Let no man think his new behaviour strange,
No metamorphosis can Nature change;
Effects are chain'd to causes; generally,
The rascal born will like a rascal die.
" His Prince's favours follow'd him in vain;
They chang'd the circumstance, but not the man.
While out of pocket, and his spirits low,
He 'd beg, write panegyrics, cringe, and bow;
But when good pensions had his labours crown'd,
His panegyrics into satires turn'd;

O what assiduous pains does PRIOR take
To let great Dorset see he could mistake!
Dissembling Nature false description gave,
Shew'd him the Poet, but conceal'd the
Knave."

To us the Poet PRIOR is better known than the Place-man PRIOR; yet in his own day the reverse often occurred. PRIOR was a State-Proteus; Sunderland, the most ambiguous of politicians, was the *Erle Robert* to whom he addressed his *Mice* — and PRIOR was now Secretary to the Embassy at Ryswick and Paris; independent even of the English Ambassador — now a Lord of Trade, and, at length, a Minister-plenipotentiary to Louis XIV.

Our business is with his poetical feelings.

PRIOR declares he was chiefly "a Poet by accident;" and hints, in collecting his works, that "some of them, as they came

singly from the first impression, have lain long and quietly in Mr. Tonson's shop." When his party had their downfall, and he was confined two years in prison, he composed his "Alma," to while away prison hours; and when, at length, he obtained his freedom, and had nothing else, in danger of penury, it was then he exulted he had never resigned his fellowship, which, in his exaltation, he had been censured for retaining, but which he said he might live upon at last. PRIOR had great sagacity, and too right a notion of human affairs in politics, to expect his party would last his time, or in poetry, that he could ever derive a revenue from rhimes!

I will now shew that that rare personage, a sensible Poet, in reviewing his life in that hour of solitude when no passion is retained

but truth, while we are casting up the amount of our past days scrupulously to ourselves, felicitated himself that the natural bent of his mind, which inclined to poetry, had been checked, and not indulged, throughout his whole life. PRIOR congratulated himself that he had been only "a Poet by accident," not by occupation.

In a manuscript by PRIOR, consisting of "An Essay on Learning," I find this curious and interesting passage entirely relating to the Poet himself:

"I remember nothing farther in life than that I made verses; I chose Guy earl of Warwick for my first hero, and killed Colborne the giant before I was big enough for Westminster school. But I had two accidents in youth which hindered me from being quite possessed with the Muse. I was bred in a college where prose was more in fashion than

verse; and, as soon as I had taken my first degree, I was sent the King's Secretary to the Hague; there I had enough to do in studying French and Dutch, and altering my Terentian and Virgilian style, into that of Articles and Conventions; so that *poetry, which by the bent of my mind might have become the business of my life, was, by the happiness of my education, only the amusement of it;* and in this too having the prospect of some little fortune to be made, and friendships to be cultivated with the great men, I did not launch much into *Satire*, which, however agreeable for the present to the writers and encouragers of it, does in time do neither of them good; considering the uncertainty of fortune, and the various changes of Ministry, and that every man, as he resents, may punish in his turn of greatness and power."

Such is the wholesome counsel of the Solomon of Bards to an aspirant, who in his ardour for poetical honours, becomes care-

less of their consequences, if he can but possess them.

I have now to bring forward one of those unhappy men of rhyme, who, after many painful struggles, and a long querulous life, have died amidst the ravings of their immortality — one of those miserable Bards of mediocrity, whom no Beadle-critic could ever whip out of the poetical parish.

There is a case in Mr. Haslam's "Observations on Insanity," who assures us that the patient he describes was insane, which will appear strange to those who have watched more poets than lunatics!

"This patient, when admitted, was very noisy, and importunately talkative — reciting passages from the Greek and Roman poets, or talking of his own literary importance. He became so troublesome to the other madmen, who were sufficiently occupied with their own

speculations, that they avoided and excluded him from the common room; so that he was at last reduced to the mortifying situation, of being the sole auditor of his own compositions. He conceived himself very nearly related to Anacreon, and possessed of the peculiar vein of that poet."

Such is the very accurate case drawn up by a medical writer. I can perceive nothing in it to warrant the charge of insanity; Mr. Haslam, not being a Poet, seems to have mistaken the common orgasm of poetry for insanity itself.

Of such poets, one was the late PERCIVAL STOCKDALE, who, with the most entertaining simplicity, has, in "The Memoirs of his Life and Writings," presented us with a full-length figure of this class of Poets; those whom the perpetual pursuits of poetry, however indifferent, involve in

a perpetual illusion; they are only discovered in their profound obscurity by the piteous cries they sometimes utter; they live on querulously, which is an evil for themselves, and to no purpose of life, which is an evil to others.

About thirty years ago I remember one PERCIVAL STOCKDALE, as a condemned Poet of the times; of whom the Bookseller Flexney complained, that whenever this Poet came to town, it cost him twenty pounds. Flexney had been the publisher of Churchill's works; and, never forgetting the time when he published "The Rosciad," which at first did not sell, and afterwards became the most popular poem, he was still speculating all his life for another Churchill, and another quarto poem. Stockdale usually brought him what he wanted — and Flexney found the workman, but never the work.

Many a year had passed in silence, and STOCKDALE could hardly be considered alive, when, about three years ago, to the amazement of some curious observers of our Literature, a venerable man about his eightieth year, a vivacious spectre, with a cheerful voice, seemed as if throwing aside his shroud in gaiety — to come to assure us of the immortality of one of the worst poets of the time.

To have taken this portrait from the life would have been difficult; but the artist has painted himself, and manufactured his own colours; else had our ordinary ones but faintly copied this Chinese grotesque picture — the glare and the glow must be borrowed from his own pallet *.

Our Self-biographer announces his

* I have elsewhere made some use of these characteristics of a certain species of Poets.

"Life" with prospective rapture, at the moment he is turning a sad retrospect on his "Writings;" for this was the chequered countenance of his character, a smile while he was writing, a tear when he had published! "I know," he exclaims, "that this book will live and escape *the havoc that has been made of my literary fame.*" Again — "Before I die, I *think my literary fame may be fixed on an adamantine foundation.*" Our old acquaintance Blas of Santillane, at setting out on his travels, conceived himself to be *la huitieme merveille du monde;* but here is one, who, after the experience of a long life, is writing a large work to prove himself that very curious thing.

What were these mighty and unknown works? Nothing less than half a dozen

unlucky attempts at the "Ryme" of stone-cutters. STOCKDALE confesses that all his verses have been received with negligence or contempt; yet their mediocrity, the absolute poverty of his genius, never once occurred to the poetical patriarch.

I have said that the frequent origin of bad Poets is owing to bad Critics; and it was the early friends of STOCKDALE, who, mistaking his animal spirits for genius, by directing them into the walks of poetry, bewildered him for ever. It was their hand that heedlessly fixed the bias in the rolling bowl of his restless mind.

He tells us that while yet a boy of twelve years old, one day talking with his father at Branxton, where the battle of Flodden was fought, the old gentleman said to him with great emphasis,

"You may make that place remarkable for your birth, if you take care of yourself. My father's understanding was clear and strong, and he could penetrate human nature. He already saw that *I had natural advantages above those of common men.*"

But it seems that, at some earlier period even than his twelfth year, some good-natured Pythian had predicted that STOCKDALE would be "a Poet." This ambiguous oracle was still listened to, after a lapse of more than half a century, and the decree is still repeated with fond credulity: "Notwithstanding," he exclaims, "*all that is past,* O thou god of my mind! (meaning the aforesaid Pythian) I still hope that my future fame will decidedly *warrant the prediction!*"

Stockdale had, in truth, an excessive sensibility of temper, without any controul over it — he had all the nervous contortions of the Sibyl, without her inspiration, and shifting, in his many-shaped life, through all characters and all pursuits, "exalting the olive of Minerva with the grape of Bacchus," as he phrases it, he was a lover, a tutor, a recruiting officer, a reviewer, and, at length, a clergyman; but a poet eternally! His mind was so curved, that nothing could stand steadily upon it. The accidents of such a life he describes with such a face of rueful simplicity, and mixes up so much grave drollery and merry pathos with all he says or does, and his ubiquity is so wonderful, that he gives an idea of a character, of whose existence we had previously no

conception, that of a Sentimental Harlequin *.

I shall now produce an instance of the hallucination of a poetical intellect, from which the mind of STOCKDALE was never cleared — whether an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Haslam had converted that sensible philosopher into a Poet, or STOCKDALE into a patient, is now too late to conjecture. The trial of one

* My old favourite Cynic, with all his rough honesty and acute discrimination, Anthony Wood, engraved a sketch of STOCKDALE when he etched with his aqua-fortis the personage of a brother: — "This Edward Waterhouse wrote a rhapsodical, indigested, whimsical work; and not in the least to be taken into the hand of any sober scholar, unless it be to make him laugh or wonder at the simplicity of some people. He was a cockbrained man, and afterwards took orders."

evening, when the physician, as a test of the state of STOCKDALE's mind, no doubt, affirmed *Watts* to be just as good a poet as *Pope*, threw poor STOCKDALE instantaneously into a violent paroxysm, from which perhaps he never quite recovered.

In the early part of his life, STOCKDALE undertook many poetical pilgrimages; he visited the house where Thomson was born; the coffee-room where Dryden presided among the wits, &c. Recollecting the influence of these local associations, he breaks forth, "Neither the unrelenting coldness, nor the repeated insolence of mankind, can prevent me from thinking that *something like this enthusiastic devotion may hereafter be paid to* ME."

Perhaps, till this appeared, it might not be suspected that any unlucky writer of

verse could ever feel such a magical conviction of his poetical stability. STOCKDALE, for this purpose of visiting him after he was dead, has particularised all the spots where his works were composed! Posterity has many shrines to visit, and will be glad to know (for perhaps it may excite a smile) that "The Philosopher, a poem, was written in Warwick Court, Holborn, in 1769,"—"The Life of Waller, in Round Court in the Strand."—A good deal he wrote in "May's Buildings, St. Martin's Lane, &c." but

"In my lodgings at Portsmouth, in St. Mary's Street, I wrote my Elegy on the Death of a Lady's Linnet. It will not be uninteresting to sensibility, to thinking and elegant minds. It deeply interested me, and therefore produced not one of my weakest and worst written poems. It was directly opposite to a noted

house, which was distinguished by the name of *the green rails;* where the riotous orgies of Naxus and Cythera contrasted my quiet and purer occupations.'—

Of writing an Elegy on a Lady's linnet! —which, however affecting, this account is not less so, including the episode of "the green rails."

I would not, however take his own estimate for his own poems; because, after praising them outrageously, he seems at times to doubt if they are as exquisite as he thinks them! He has composed no one, in which some poetical excellence does not appear—and yet in each nice decision he holds with difficulty the trepidations of the scales of criticism—for he tells us of "An Address to the Supreme Being, that it is distinguished throughout with a natural and fervid piety;

it is flowing and poetical; it is not without its pathos." And yet, notwithstanding all this condiment, the confection is evidently good for nothing; for he discovers that "this flowing, fervid, and poetical address" is "not animated with that vigour which gives dignity and impression to poetry." One feels for such unhappy and infected Authors—they would think of themselves as they wish, at the moment that truth and experience come in upon them, and rack them with the most painful feelings.

STOCKDALE once wrote a declamatory life of Waller.—When Johnson's appeared, though in his biography, says STOCKDALE, "he paid a large tribute to the abilities of Goldsmith and Hawkesworth, yet *he made no mention of my name.*" It is evident that Johnson, who knew him well, did not care to remember it. When Johnson

was busied on the life of Pope, STOCKDALE wrote a pathetic letter to him, *earnestly imploring* "a generous tribute from his authority." Johnson was still obdurately silent; and STOCKDALE, who had received many acts of humane kindness from him, adds with fretful *naiveté*,

"In his sentiments towards me he was divided between a benevolence to my interests, and a *coldness to my fame*."

Thus, in a moment, in the perverted heart of the scribbler, will ever be cancelled all human obligation for acts of benevolence, if we are *cold to his fame!*

And yet let us not too hastily condemn these unhappy men, even for the violation of the lesser moral feelings — it is often but a fatal effect from a melancholy cause; that hallucination of the intellect, in which, if their genius, as they call it, sometimes

appears to sparkle like a painted bubble in the buoyancy of their vanity, they are condemned to see it sinking in the dark horrors of a disappointed author, who has risked his life and his happiness, on the miserable productions of his pen. The agonies of a disappointed author cannot, indeed, be contemplated without pain. If they can instruct, the following quotation will have its use.

Among the innumerable productions of STOCKDALE, was a History of Gibraltar; which might have been interesting from his having resided there: in a moment of despair, like Medea, he immolated his unfortunate offspring.

"When I had arrived at within a day's work of its conclusion, in consequence of some immediate and mortifying accidents, *my literary adversity*, and all my other misfortunes, took

fast hold of my mind; oppressed it extremely; and reduced it to a stage of the deepest dejection and despondency. In this unhappy view of life, I made a sudden resolution — *never more to prosecute the profession of an Author;* to retire altogether from the world, and read only for consolation and amusement. *I committed to the flames my History of Gibraltar, and my translation of Marsollier's Life of Cardinal Ximenes;* for which the bookseller had refused to pay me the fifty guineas according to agreement."

This claims a tear! Never were the agonies of literary disappointment more pathetically told.

But as it is impossible to have known poor deluded STOCKDALE, and not to have laughed at him more than to have wept for him — so the catastrophe of this Author's literary life is as finely in charac-

ter as all the acts. That catastrophe, of course, is his last poem.

After many years his poetical demon having been chained from the world, suddenly broke forth on the reports of a French invasion. The narrative shall proceed in his own inimitable manner.

" My poetical spirit excited me to write my poem of ' The Invincible Island.' I never found myself in a happier disposition to compose, nor ever wrote with more pleasure. I presumed warmly to hope, that unless *inveterate prejudice and malice* were as invincible as our island itself, it would have *the diffusive circulation* which I earnestly desired.

" Flushed with this idea — borne impetuously along by *ambition and by hope, though they had often deluded me,* I set off in the Mail coach from Durham, for London, on the 9th of December, 1797, at midnight, and in a severe storm. On my arrival in town, my

poem was advertised, printed, and published with great expedition. It was printed for Clarke in New Bond Street. For several days the sale was very promising; and my bookseller as well as myself entertained sanguine hopes; *but the demand for the poem relaxed gradually!* From this last of many literary misfortunes I inferred that *prejudice* and *malignity*, in my fate as an *Author*, seemed, indeed, to be invincible."

The catastrophe of the poet is much better told than any thing in the poem; which had not merit enough to support that interest which the temporary subject, had excited.

Let the fate of STOCKDALE instruct some, and he will not have written in vain the "Memoirs of his Life and Writings." I have only turned the literary feature to our eye; it was combined with others, equally striking, from the same mould in

which that was cast. STOCKDALE imagined he possessed an intuitive knowledge of human nature. He says, "every thing that constituted my nature, my acquirements, my habits, and my fortune, conspired to let in upon me a complete knowledge of human nature." A most striking proof of this knowledge is his parallel after the manner of Plutarch, between Charles XII. and himself! He frankly confesses there were some points in which he and the Swedish monarch did not exactly resemble each other. He thinks, for instance, that the King of Sweden had a somewhat more fervid and original genius than himself, and was likewise a little more robust in his person —but, subjoins STOCKDALE,

"Of our reciprocal fortune, atchievements, and conduct, some parts will be to *his* advantage, and some to *mine*."

Yet in regard to *Fame*, the main object between him and Charles XII, STOCKDALE imagined that his own

"Will not probably take its fixed and immoveable station, and shine with its expanded and permanent splendour, till it consecrates his ashes, till it illumines his tomb!"

POPE hesitated at deciding on the durability of his poetry. PRIOR congratulates himself that he had not devoted all his days to rhimes. STOCKDALE imagines his fame is to commence at the very point (the tomb) where genius trembles its own may nearly terminate!

To close this article, I could wish to regale the poetical STOCKDALES with a delectable morsel of fraternal biography; such would be the life and its memorable close of ELKANAH SETTLE, who imagined himself to be a great Poet, when he was

placed on a level with Dryden by the town-wits, gentle spirits! to vex genius.

Settle's play of "The Empress of Morocco" was on that occasion the very first "adorned with sculptures." However, in due time, the Whigs despising his rhimes, SETTLE tried his prose for the Tories; but he was a magician whose enchantments never charmed. He at length obtained the office of the City Poet, when Lord Mayors were proud enough to have laureates in their annual pageants. In the latter part of his life SETTLE dropped still lower, and became the Poet of a booth at Bartholomew fair, and composed drolls, for which the rival of Dryden, it seems, had a genius!—but it was little respected—for two great personages, "Mrs. Minns, and her daughter Mrs. Leigh," approving of their great Poet's happy invention in one

of his own drolls, "St. George for England," of a green dragon, as large as life, insisted, as the tyrant of old did to the inventor of the brazen bull, that the first experiment should be made on the artist himself, and Settle was tried in his own dragon; he crept in with all his genius, and did "act the dragon, inclosed in a case of green leather of his own invention." The circumstance is recorded in the lively verse of Young, in his "Epistle to Pope concerning the Authors of the age."

"Poor Elkanah, all other changes past,
For bread, in Smithfield dragons hist at last,
Spit streams of fire to make the butchers gape,
And found his manners suited to his shape;
Such is the fate of talents misapplied;
So lived your prototype, and so he died."

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